

## Electronic Collection Development Activities in Babcock University Laz Otti Memorial Library

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**Abstract** - Collection development generally involves activities such as selection, acquisition, user studies, collection evaluation, weeding, and interlibrary cooperation. These activities are also achievable through electronic collection development. It has been observed that declining funds and book votes has forced academic libraries all over the world to embrace the use of electronic collection development for the mutual benefit of their patrons. And this may have prompted the current state of electronic collection development activities in Laz Otti Memorial Library. Therefore, this study showed the state of electronic collection development procedures in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria. In this study, a triangulation of qualitative and quantitative (mixed) approach to survey research design was used. The population comprised the professional and para-professional staff of the library with a total number of thirty-seven (37). Total enumeration was used. The instruments for data collection include a semi-structured interview guide and a self-developed questionnaire. The interview was conducted with 8 librarians who were part of the library management. The questionnaire was administered to the subjects personally and was returned in usable form, indicating a 100% return rate. The analysis was done using a thematic approach and descriptive statistics like percentage. The findings showed that e-books, e-journals, and audio-visual materials are some of the electronic resources subscribed and acquired in the library. It revealed that the majority of library staff were unaware of the electronic collection development activities in Laz Otti Memorial library, Babcock University, Nigeria. The study concluded that electronic collection development activities were ongoing in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria, although its knowledge among staff was low. It recommended that the library management should ensure that awareness of electronic collection development activities among their staff are created through workshops, seminars and in-house training.

**Keywords:** Collection Development, Electronic Resources, Electronic Collection Development activities, Libraries, Babcock University

## **Introduction**

Libraries are established to support their parent organizations and individuals through the provision of current information resources to achieve their stated goals in research, teaching, learning and community services. Library information resources must be relevant, current and reliable for transforming lives and impacting society positively. Therefore, the specific library objectives are to provide various information materials irrespective of formats (print and non print) to meet the needs of all library patrons and attract highly qualified staff to manage technology-driven information society. While, the general objective of the 21<sup>st</sup> libraries is to satisfy the current and future needs of library users by ensuring that current, relevance, and quality resources are acquired. Libraries are established to collect, organize, process, store, preserve and disseminate information resources of any formats to users as quickly as possible. In this digital age, library users have their information needs met by using various types of information formats. These services provision is known as collection development or collection management.

Collection development is the process of selecting, ordering and paying for information materials selected for use by potential users in the library or outside the library walls. It is the process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on the information needs of the library's clientele, analysis of usage statistics, and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations (Haliso & Aina, 2012). In other words, it is the process of building up and improving upon a library's information resources. Nnadozie (2006) pointed out that collection development is a planned, continuous and cost effective acquisition of quality and relevant materials to meet the needs of the users and objectives of the university libraries. It helps to enhance the gathering and provision of a variety of information materials to meet the needs of library users. It also helps in building up and improving upon a library's information resources.

Collection development is a many-sided activity. Its scope cut across acquisition, user assessment, policies, selection, weeding and evaluation (Edoka, 2000). Kumar, Hussian and Singh (2008) identified the components of collection development as assessing user needs, evaluating the present collection, determining selection policies, coordinating selection, re-evaluating and storing parts of the collection, and planning for resource sharing. All these aspects of collection development activities ensure the effectiveness of the library collection. However, collection development is guided by a written policy document in various libraries. It is important to have the collection development policy written to make for objectivity in developing the library collection. A collection development policy is essential for a balanced and robust collection in this digital age. It specifies the scope of the collection, authority for selection, criteria for allocation of funds and for selection of various types of materials, priorities in selection and criteria for weeding (Kumar et al., 2008).

In this digital age, Collection development policy has been changed and reviewed in libraries. Therefore, change has occurred in the types of information resources acquire in the library to meet users need. Some libraries are shifting away from print resources to electronic resources, where a greater percentage of the budget of most libraries is spent on electronic resources such as e-book, e-journal as well as online information resources and subject electronic information databases (Abubakar, 2010). Today, library users do not need to visit the physical library to use the library resources, but the users can access electronic services from their homes, and offices through online networks.

## **Statement of the Problem**

It has been observed and confirmed in studies that despite its importance, many libraries in Nigeria are yet to develop a comprehensive electronic collection development policy to address their collection of electronic resources (Sambo, Abu-udenyi, Urhufe & Yakubu, 2014; Nwosu, Okeke & Ejedafiru, 2013). In most of the academic libraries, collection development appears to focus on print resources (Nwosu & Udo-Anyanwu, 2015). As a result, many library employees know little about the electronic collection development activities carried out in their libraries. Moreover, it is not clear if private universities in Nigeria are towing this line, since there are few studies in this context. It is on this basis that this study investigated the level of awareness of electronic collection development activities in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria.

## **Objective of the study**

The main purpose of this study is to find out if library staff are aware of electronic collection development activities in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

1. find out the forms of electronic resources available in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria.
2. ascertain the electronic collection development activities carried out in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria.
3. determine the staff responsible for the selection of electronic resources in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria.
4. investigate the method of acquisition of electronic resources used in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University, Nigeria.

## **Literature Review**

Libraries provide needed support for learning, teaching and research in the universities. They also provide services that are in demand, aimed at the meeting information needs of the library users. The core of the library is the collection development as it constitutes the basic action of service delivery in any library. The need for systematic development of a library's collection is being emphasized in literature. According to Eguavon, Madu and Dasiru (2002), Collection development is a planned, systematic development of a collection based on the objectives of the library. It is the process of planning and building a useful and balanced collection of library materials over a period of years, based on an ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library's clientele, analysis of usage statistics, and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations (Haliso & Aina, 2012). Collection development as a number of library activities including selection of resources, acquisition of materials selected, and the development of plans for sharing resources between libraries, the maintenance of resources acquired, weeding and evaluation (Ojebode, 2009). This includes the formulation of selection criteria, planning for resource sharing, as well as replacement of lost and damaged materials.

Today, the growth of the internet and the world wide web have created opportunities for a wide variety of electronic information resources which are fast becoming the veritable resources of scholarly communication and librarian can acquire all available electronic information resources for its library because it is expensive (Bozimo, 2011). Tonta (2004) argued that owning information sources "just in case" users might need them is no longer the

dominant method of collection development in libraries and information centers. Instead, information centers concentrate on providing “just in time” access to electronic resources should the users need them. Today, users can have their information needs met through availability of online information resources. They need not to visit the physical library to use print formats, but through network they can stay at home or the office and access online library resources and service. The users can access electronic services from their homes, and offices while the library can conveniently get usage statistics of their resources which can also be made possible with the print resources (Aleraraiye, 2005).

Literature shows that the advanced countries shifted towards the use of ITs in library collections from traditional print resources to electronic resources (Abubakar, 2010). In such countries, a greater percentage of the budget of libraries is spent on e-resources such as e-book, e-journal as well as online and subject databases. Ironically, university libraries in Nigeria seem to be lacking behind in this area. Utilization of electronic collections such as online and other electronic information resources is the best way to meeting up with user information needs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Shukla and Mishra (2011) described electronic collection as the collection of information that can be accessed using electronic gadgets. They are a collection of information created electronically that form part of an electronic record and that is usually stored separately within the digital file making up the electronic record as a whole. Electronic information resources or electronic resources are essential constituents of collection in libraries. These are sources of information which libraries provide access to in electronic formats. They include materials that are available and can be accessed electronically through such computer networked facilities as online library catalogues, the internet and the world wide web, digital libraries and archives, government portals and websites, CD-Rom databases, (Tsakonas et al 2006; IFLA, 2012), online academic databases such as Medline or commercial databases such as LexisNexis (Karunaratna, 2014).

Noreh (2009) described electronic resources as online information resources that include bibliographic databases, electronic reference books, search for full-text collections, digital collections of data and data sets. The criteria applied in traditional collection development also apply to most electronic resources in the library. Many traditional libraries are turning into hybrid, digital and electronic libraries (Yeow-fei, 2012). The adoption of electronic resources in academic libraries is on the increase because of the advantages attached to their use. The advantages of the use of electronic information resources are enormous. Scholars like Shukla and Mishra (2011) and Balanque (2012) noted the following advantages:

- It provides a faster means of access to information compared to the traditional methods
- It is easier to update and can be formatted to suite users
- It is economical compare to traditional collection
- It is also economical in terms of space; it require no physical space
- It is flexible and its use may not be restricted to location or time specific
- It is accessible
- It is easily searchable

Notwithstanding the merit of e-resources, the challenges in the collection and management of electronic resources in libraries are numerous and include training users, up-grading technologies, financial constraints, sourcing IT skilled manpower, frequent website changes and authentication (Behera & Singh, 2011; Balanque, 2012). Nwosu, Okeke and Ejedafiru (2013) identified major problems associated with electronic information management in the university libraries to include funding for the purchase of electronic resources, poor technological infrastructures, little or no capacity building for librarians and users, irregular

power supply, limited bandwidth, very low density of PCs and relatively little awareness of the value of electronic resources. Mole and Obidike (2016) pointed out that electronic collection development is not yet very effective in Nigeria university libraries. Noting inadequate funding for automation, poor technical knowledge, low bandwidth in internet connectivity and lack of sound administrative policies and guidelines as challenges. They suggested constant evaluation of automation facilities as well as regular systems upgrade, provision and training of manpower in use of facilities as strategies for overcoming these challenges.

Sambo, Abu-udenyi, Urhefe and Yakubu (2014) investigated 364 certified librarians' perception on collection development policy of e-resources in Nigerian libraries using a questionnaire. Findings revealed that many libraries do not have a written electronic collection development policy; a committee for planning and evaluation of e-collection management and no e-collection selection criteria. These scholars believed that this situation can be traced to the poor knowledge and skill of librarians on e-resources management. They recommended training and re-training of librarians on e-resources collection management, formulation and development of e-resources policy, the constitution of e-resources management committee among others.

Noreh's (2009) description of electronic resources as digital collections of data and data sets drew attention to a gap in knowledge as it exposed the need for a theoretical basis for electronic collection development. Literature discussing electronic collection development in the library and linking this to theory remains scarce. However, a review of related works pointed to two theories: Cantor set theory and the CREW theory. The Cantor set theory was developed by Perez-Lopez, De la Moneda-Corrochano and Moros-Rodríguez in 2002. This theory addresses collection development broadly. It provides a graphical representation of knowledge and can be used as an aid in electronic collection development. It describes collection of cases or objects that constitute a set, but its apparent strength is in analyzing and evaluating existing collections to inform selection decisions. Collection analysis is a vital component of collection development and the application of an aid, such as this theory, when conducting analysis of current collections may result in more accurate and comprehensive collection analyses.

Continuous review, evaluation and weeding, CREW is another collection development theory that specifically addresses weeding. CREW is a systematic weeding plan consisting of 10 steps including "developing a weeding policy, reviewing usage statistics, gathering weeding tools, examining individual items, conducting an inventory, consulting standard indexes, sorting and handling weeded materials, ordering necessary replacements, setting up displays for low-circulating materials, and weeding on an annual basis" (Boon 2009:325). It is used in this study to consider how de-selection forms part of the discussion on developing collections responsive to community needs. Both theories would serve as the theoretical framework to support findings and discussions on the electronic collection development in terms of perspective and environment of the current study.

## **Methodology**

In this study, a triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative (mixed) approach to survey research design was used. The study population comprised (16) professional and (21) para-professional staff of the library with a total number of thirty-seven (37). Total enumeration was used since the number was small and accessible. A semi-structured interview guide and



questionnaire constituted the instruments for data collection. A total of 8 in-depth interviews were conducted with library management consisting of the university librarian and various heads of units to seek detailed insights on the topic investigated and compliment the quantitative findings. A self-developed questionnaire was administered to the 37 subjects personally and all copies were returned in usable form, indicating a 100% return rate. Data collected was analyzed and presented using table and percentage. The analysis of quantitative data was done using descriptive statistics while the thematic approach was used to develop and discuss the qualitative data which was analyzed under three themes.

## Findings

**Table 1: Forms of Electronic Resources Available in the Library**

Option	Responses (%)
Electronic Books	57.3
Electronic Journals	60.2
Audio visuals	51.9
ICT hardware and software	57.3

Table 1 shows the percentage of the respondents that indicated electronic books (57.3%), electronic journals (60.2%), audio visuals (51.9%), ICT hardware and software (57.3%). This implies that various forms of electronic resources are available in the Laz Otti Memorial Library. During the interviews, participants corroborated that Laz Otti Memorial Library had electronic books, electronic journals, audio visuals and ICT hardware and software to access electronic resources. Based on this finding, it could be deduced that Laz Otti Memorial Library management has fair understanding of the benefits of the inclusion of electronic materials in its collection.

**Table 2: Electronic Collection Development Activities**

Option	Responses (%)
Selection	10.9
Acquisition	10.9
Collection evaluation	32.7
User study/Community analysis	42.7
Weeding	8.1
Resource sharing/library cooperation	35.4

Table 2 shows the participants response to a range of electronic collection development activities that may be carried out in the library. They indicated that selection (10.9%), acquisition (10.9%), collection evaluation (32.7%), user/community analysis (42.7%), weeding (8.1%) and library cooperation (35.4%). From this result, it can be seen that a greater percentage of the library staff had no knowledge of the listed items. The interviews threw more light on the electronic collection development activities of the library. mentioned that there were online databases the library subscribes to like EBSCOHOST, AGORA, HINARI, OARE, AGORA, HEINOLINE, LEXISNEXIS to mention a few from which the university librarian/ICT librarian often selected various electronic resources after consulting with the subject specialist and lecturers in the various departments. These interview participants pointed out that several electronic resources had been acquired for the library. On the factors considered during acquisition, the participants argued that the subscription rates for e-journals, accessibility of online electronic databases, institutional repositories and

academic programmes of the institution were considered. In addition, hardware and software compatibility are considered before acquiring ICT materials.

During the interview, two participants revealed that Laz Otti Memorial library did not have an e-collection evaluation criterion and committee. They believe that the decision of an evaluation committee is likely to facilitate better e-collection management. Theorists like Cantor see collection evaluation as a vital component of collection development. The application of the cantor set theory as an aid, when conducting analysis of current collections may result in more accurate and comprehensive collection analysis. This is because the Cantor set theory has its apparent strength in analyzing and evaluating collections to inform selection decisions. User study/ community analysis is another electronic collection development activity. The application of the reviewing usage statistics step of the CREW theory addresses user study/ community analysis. For weeding, the CREW theory shows how de-selection is applicable in developing collections responsive to community needs.

For library cooperation, the response from the interview participants to the question, “Is your library involved in library cooperation?” was confirmed by five (5) interview participants. These participants asserted that Laz Otti Memorial library had been cooperating with several international Adventist higher education institutions through electronic resource sharing. Their assertion is in line with the view of scholars like Aguolu and Aguolu (2002) that reported the increased cooperative activities of libraries at local, national and international levels.

**Table 3: People Responsible for Selection of Electronic Resources**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Response rate (%)</b>
University Librarian	8.3
Teaching staff	22.3
Subject specialists	30.5
Students/library users	10
Combined effort of the university librarian, teaching staff, subject specialists and students.	25

Table 3 shows the opinion of respondents on the category of people responsible for the selection of electronic resources in Laz Otti Memorial Library. The result revealed that (8.3%) respondents indicated that the responsibility for selection rests on the university librarian. (22.3%) indicated that teaching staff were involved in the selection of information materials. The importance of the participation of teaching staff in the selection process had been noted in Ifidon (1985), asserting that their participation is needed since they are in a better position to determine which of the information materials are relevant to the courses taught by them. Table 3 further shows that respondents (30.56%) indicated that subject specialist involved in the selection of library materials. Also, (10%) of the respondents indicated that the responsibility for selection rests on the students. While (25%) indicated that the selection process involved a combined effort of the university librarian, teaching staff, subject specialists and students/library users.

The interviews revealed more on the selection of electronic resources as part of electronic collection development activities of the library. During the interview, two participants revealed that the library did not have an e-collection selection criterion. The selection criterion is a very important aspect of collection development and management. It is an

important part of the e-collection policy. The interview participants also reviewed that the library did not have a committee to guide the process of selection and management of e-collection of libraries. Scholars have pointed out that the collection evaluation committee is very important in e-collection management (Sambo, Abu-udenyi, Urhefe & Yakubu, 2014). The participants argued that “two or more heads are better than one.” They believe that the decision of evaluation and selection committee is likely to facilitate better e-collection management.

In order to ascertain the e-collection acquisition methods adopted in the library, table 4 shows the response rate.

**Table 4: Electronic Collection Acquisition Methods**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Response rate (%)</b>
Purchase	41.67
Gift/donation	19.4
Electronic exchange	27.78
Electronic copying	5.56
In-house/self archiving	5.56

Table 4 shows the response of respondents to electronic collection acquisition methods. The table reveals that purchase (41.7%), gift/donation (19.4%), e-exchange (27.8%), electronic copying (5.6%) and In-house/self archiving (5.6%). The finding shows that majority of the library staff do not have knowledge of the electronic collection acquisition methods in the library. The interview corroborated this finding as only three participants appeared to understand the electronic collection acquisition methods used in the library. These participants explained that purchase as a method, results in the deliberate acquisition of electronic resources/materials available on the internet through online database, e-books, e-journals, CD-ROM databases and other computer base electronic databases, among others. Afolabi (2007) points out that some the databases are provided free of charge to libraries in developing countries by their publishers or vendors like: NARI, <http://www.healthinternet.org/scipub.php>; Hinari, GOALI, ARDI OARE, DOAJ, AGORA, <http://login.research4life.org/tacgw/login.cshtml>; <http://www.agininternet.org/en/>. Others do require subscription fees like: emerald database, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com> EBSCOHOST, <http://search.ebscohost.com/> and Blackwell-synergy: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com> among others. Some of the acquisition tools used in Nigerian libraries for e-collection development include e-book reviews, publishers’ catalogue, e-resources vendors, OPAC, and the social media (Sambo, Abu-udenyi, Urhefe & Yakubu, 2014).

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study concluded that majority of the library staff in Laz Otti Memorial Library, Babcock University were not aware of electronic collection development activities. They had no knowledge of electronic collection development activities relating to acquisition, user studies, interlibrary cooperation and collection evaluation. The results further showed that electronic books, electronic journals, audiovisual, ICT hardware, and software are available in the library while, a greater percentage of the library staff had no knowledge of the selection process and electronic collection acquisition methods as (25%) of the respondents indicated that selection process involved a combined effort of the university librarian, teaching staff and subject specialists. Based on the findings, the study recommended that electronic



collection development policy is needed to acquaint library staff on electronic collection development activities and the library management should ensure that awareness of electronic collection development activities among their staff are created through workshops, seminars and in-house training.

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