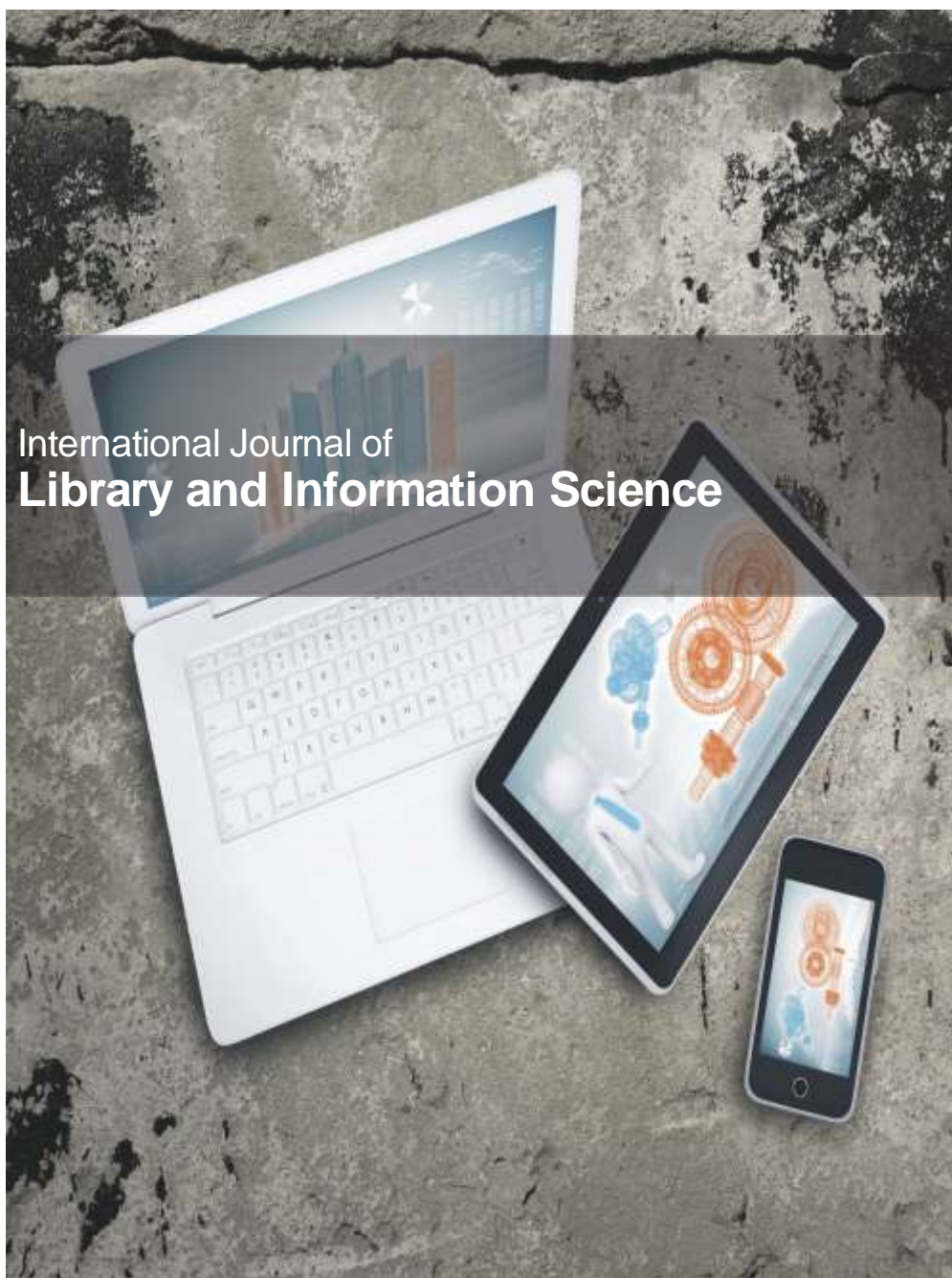


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Role of librarians in the protection of copyright in Nigeria

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The objective of the study is to examine the role of librarians in the protection of copyright in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Questionnaire was the primary tool used for data collection. The study population consists of 63 professional librarians from the five selected universities in Ogun State. A total of 49 questionnaires were retrieved out of 63 administered and given a response rate of 77.8%. It was found that librarians are aware of the provisions of copyright law and take some measures to prevent its infringement. It was recommended among others that librarians should be more intentional in ensuring that copyright is not violated in the library by engaging all the available measures to ensure compliance.

Key words: Copyright, Librarians, University Libraries, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Access to information makes for better people, more efficient and effective workers, and more responsive and responsible citizens, and a library's main role is as a provider of that access to information (Nkondo et al., 2014). Librarians play an important role in the free access to information. They are responsible for dissemination of information. They are also expected to protect intellectual property rights of creators. However, intellectual property rights are limitations to access of information. This dilemma has caused librarians, according to Aguirre (2010) to tend to swing towards either of two extremes: towards a strict interpretation and implementation of the rules, thus, hampering service; or towards complete disregard of them, bordering on irresponsibility that can open them to charges of copyright violation, or abetting

violation of the law by their clients. It must be noted that the right of access to information is not an unqualified right, but is subject to limitations regulated by law. Copyright law is created to limit the access to information with the intention to secure authors' exclusive rights to their intellectual creations. The law, however, also makes provision for exceptions. The exception is expected to create a balance between users' access to information and the protection of the intellectual property of creators. Copyright is one of the two branches of the law known as intellectual property. The other branch relates to industrial property. Copyright is a legal right that protects the owner of an intellectual property from exploitation. It comprises two main sets of rights: the economic rights and the moral rights. Copyright essentially relates to those acts

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which the creator reserves to himself or his near and dear ones in his creative works. These include right to reproduce, right to modify, right to commit for translation, right to transmutation, right to commit to other forms like cinematographic reproduction, etc (Jadhav, 2012). This law protects the indiscriminate copying and distribution of an author's work without the permission of the author. Copyright law in Nigeria is governed by the Copyright Act 1988 with its amendments of 1992 and 1999 which is now re-codified in 2004 in the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004 Cap. C28. The primary function of Copyright under the law is to protect from annexation the fruits of a person's work (Babafemi 2007). Jadhav (2012), assert that in any educational institution, librarians play a key role in many spheres, including copyright. The main role of librarians is to make available library collections to students and faculty in support of teaching, learning, research and scholarship. Libraries are fills in a unique position as custodians of copyrighted materials.

Statement of the problem

Access to information is a universal right that is protected by law to be enjoyed by all. The copyright law which protects the right of the creators of copyrighted materials tends to be a barrier to the freedom of access to information. Librarians as custodians of information are charged with the responsibility of granting free access to information and protecting the interests of copyright owners. Some studies have indicated the ignorance of librarians in their responsibility in granting access to information and in the protection of copyright. In light of this, this study undertakes to investigate the awareness of librarians' role in the protection of copyright in Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to examine the role of librarians in the protection of copyright, specifically, the study will:

1. Identify the copyrighted information materials available in libraries.
2. Determine the level of awareness of copyright law by librarians.
3. Assess the measures taken by librarians to restrict copyright infringement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolution of copyright law

Copyright is one of the two branches of the law known as intellectual property. The other branch relates to industrial

property, chiefly inventions, trademarks, industrial designs etc. Copyright law protects the owner of property rights in literary and artistic works against those who adopt the exact form of words or arrangement employed by the author in the production of his work. (Oduowo, 2002). The House of Lords remarked in the case of *George Routledge V. Sampson Low (1868)*, that the great objective of the law of copyright is to stimulate, by means of the protection secured to literary labour, the composition and publication to the world of works of learning and utility.

Copyright law was governed in Nigeria by the English Copyright Act 1911 which was made applicable to Nigeria by virtue of an order-in-council under Section 25 of the Act of 1911 of Great Britain. Nigeria applied the 1911 Act until 1970, when it was replaced with the Copyright Act of 1970. (Babafemi, 2007). Umaru (2002) noted that the 1970 Act was inadequate as it could not combat the increasing rate of piracy and other copyright infringement and there was need to increase the penal sanctions and provide adequate remedial measures. Hence, the birth of the 1988 Act. In 1992 vide the Copyright Amendment Decree No. 98 of 1992, the Act was amended. The primary legislation now is the Nigerian Copyright Act Cap. C.28, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, initially passed in 1988, amended in 1992 and 1999 and re-codified in 2004. (UNESCO World Anti Piracy Observatory 2009).

Nigeria is also signatory to a number of international conventions. The aim of conventions is to provide that countries give the same protection to the works of the nationals of other countries as they give to their nationals. Adewopo (2012) asserts that the concern about the protection across borders and the limitations of national solutions to multinational problem led to the emergence of international agreements aimed at securing copyright protection across borders. Nigeria ratified the Berne Convention in September 14, 1993 and became a member of the Universal Copyright Convention on February 14, 1962. In October 29, 1993, Nigeria also signed the Rome Convention, and ratified the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty in 1996.

Nature of copyright materials

Section 1 (1) of the Copyright Act lists six categories of materials that qualify for copyright protection. They include the following:

- a). Literary works.
- b). Musical works.
- c). Artistic works.
- d). Cinematograph films.
- e). Sound recordings.
- f). Broadcasts.

A literary work includes novels, stories, poetical works, plays, broadcasting scripts, textbooks, treatises, articles, reports, addresses, law reports and so on. Musical works include work composed for musical accomplishment. Artistic work includes painting, drawing, engravings, maps, photographs, diagram, work of sculpture, and many more. A violation of copyright occurs when a person without the consent of the owner of a copyright reproduces, communicates, to the public or broadcasts a literary, musical or artistic work in which copyright subsists. Copyright law protects the owner of the property rights in literary and artistic works against those who adopt the exact form of words or arrangement employed by the author in the production of his work. For a work to enjoy copyright protection, sufficient skill must have gone into it to give it an original character. In addition, the work must have been put in tangible form (Asein 2002). The law provides that violation of copyright occurs when without the permission of the owner, a reproduction/ photocopying of the whole copyrighted material is done. Infringement also occurs where the sale, translation/ transcription, adaptation, public lease, rental and public performance of a copyrighted material is done without the authorisation of the copyright owner.

Copyright situation in Nigeria

Copyright are rights given to creators for their literary and artistic works. Literary works include novels, poems, plays, reference works, newspapers etc. Artistic works include paintings, drawings, sculpture, maps etc. The duration of copyright is 50 years after the death of the author, or the last surviving author in case of joint authorship (Aina, 2008). Babafemi (2007) opines that the primary function of copyright under the law is to protect from annexation the fruits of a person's work. This protection is of immense importance to actors, playwrights, performers and other artists, to musicians and composers of music, to authors, publishers, newspaper proprietors and librarians, to architects, designers, lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, engineers, to editors of law reports, lecturers, professors and institution of higher learning; to broadcasters; to makers of cinematograph films and photographers and to producers of computer systems, laptops and their numerous software.

Copyright law refers to a legal concept that concerns rights to copy as it protects the labour, skill and judgment that some author, artist or some other creator expends in the creation of an original piece of work (Feather and Sturges 2003). In the case of *Yerritau V. Daily Times Nigeria Ltd* (1980), Belgore asserts that the primary function of copyright is to protect from annexation by other people, the fruits of another's work, labour, skill or taste. Babafemi (2007) argues that in a country like Nigeria, the importance of copyright cannot be

overemphasized because, Nigeria is a country where book piracy, film piracy and music piracy still reign supreme, with attendant losses of income to authors, publishers, film makers, musicians and many other copyright owners. Guobadia (1989) insists that copyright does not come under pressure in a largely illiterate society like Nigeria as the purveyor of pirated audio and video cassettes, the shopkeeper who sells pirated copies of popular textbooks and the student who makes a photocopy of an entire textbook for his use are all reacting in their own way to the situation.

According to Odunowo (2002), the violation of copyright legislation can lead to loss of income, can discourage creativity, retard industrial economic and cultural growth, and deprive the government a huge amount of taxes especially in copyright related industries. Uviegbara (1992), argues that there is need to raise the level of awareness of people about the copyright law. Faeji (2002) concurs when he assert that the level of copyright awareness in Nigeria is low and this has militated against effective copyright administration in the country. Copyright is very important because, a country's development depends to a great extent on the creativity of its nationals. For a country to develop, it needs to encourage national creativity. It is in this context that copyright has become an essential instrument in the development process. The higher the level of copyright protection, the greater the encouragement for authors to create (Ekpere 2002).

Copyright exceptions

The copyright system maintains a balance between the intellectual property interests of authors/copyright owners and the larger public interest. Asein (2012) assert that this balance is achieved by introducing various exceptions to the rights granted under the copyright law. Asein (2012) summarized the exceptions under the following heads:

1. Fair use.
2. Parody, pastiche and caricature.
3. Ephemeral use of artistic works.
4. Use for educational purpose.

Fair dealing (fair use) provisions have been described as the most significant, and most venerable limitation on the copyright holder's prerogatives (Asein, 2012). Babafemi (2007), has posited that fair dealing means that the dealing with the work must be genuine and reasonable. The Nigerian copyright law specifically grants exceptions to acts done by way of fair dealing for the purposes of research, private use, criticism, or review of the reporting of current events. Asein (2012), posit that it is impossible to lay down any hard and fast definition of what fair dealing is, because it is a matter of fact, degree, an

Table 1. Population of the study.

Name of library	Population
Babcock university	15
Bells university	8
Crescent university	4
Federal university of agriculture	21
Olabisi onabanjo university	15
Total	63

impression, but the court endorsed three factors in determining if there was indeed fair viz.

1. Whether the alleged fair dealing is in commercial competition with the owner's exploitation of the work.
2. Whether the work has already been published or otherwise exposed to the public.
3. The amount and importance of the work which has been taken.

Role of librarians in copyright protection

In any educational institution, librarians play a key role in many spheres, including copyright. The main role of librarians is to make available library collections to students and faculty in support of teaching, learning, research and scholarship. Libraries are often the only entities that provide access to the vast majority of copyrighted works that lose market vitality long before the expiration of the copyrights, and are often the only entities that preserve public domain materials (Jadhav, 2012). Libraries promote the use of the information resources it manages for purposes of education and research. Libraries as educational agency is poised to ensure that knowledge is acquired and disseminated and to ensure that equal access to information is enjoyed by all. Kharamin and Siamain (2011) citing Machell (1996), stated that the ideal library service is one where each individual, has access to the materials and information at the time they are required, in a format that can be used, in the quantities that are needed, and where the needs of the users are understood by the staff.

Jadhav (2012) highlighted the importance of librarians' role in copyright protection to include, among others, to enable users to access copyrighted and public domain works and to exercise their rights under the exceptions and limitations to creator' rights in the law. Cochran (1997) also reiterates that librarians have the professional duties concerning copyright materials, to both serve the client's needs using copyright-protected resources to provide the information requested, and to respect the intellectual property rights in the protected works that are used each day. Fabunmi (2009) stress that librarians can provide assistance to library users in order to properly

enforce the copyright laws in the library by ensuring that research projects in the library are made available to researchers for consultation only, that photocopying an entire work is disallowed, and that the principle of fair use be strictly adhered to, if photocopying is to be made for educational purposes. Librarians should ensure that precise citation is done by any researcher for any piece of information collected from a given source in the Library.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Questionnaire was the primary tool used for data collection. The study population consists of 63 professional librarians from the five selected universities in Ogun State, namely Babcock University, Ilishan-Remo, Crescent University, Abeokuta, Bells University, Ota, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta and Olabisi Onabanjo University. The five universities were selected from the 13 universities in Ogun State. The population was made up of all the 63 professional librarians of five sampled universities. A total of 49 questionnaires were retrieved out of 63 administered and given a response rate of 77.8%. The questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics which results were displayed in tables. Table 1 shows there were 15 librarians from Babcock University, 8 librarians from Bells University, 4 librarians from Crescent University, 21 librarians from Federal University of Agriculture, and 15 librarians from Olabisi Onabanjo University, respectively. Table 2 shows that out of the 63 questionnaires that were administered, a total sum of 49 (77.8%) were retrieved from the five universities and analyzed. Table 3 shows, that there are seventeen (34.7%) male respondents and 32 (65.3%) female respondents. From Table 4, it is shown that 18.4% of respondents have a Bachelor's degree, 71.4% have Master's degree, 2% have MPhil while 8.2% have doctoral degree. Table 5 shows that 36.7% of respondents have worked for between zero and five years, 24.5% have worked for between six to ten years, 18.4% have worked for between eleven to fifteen years, 10.2% have worked for between sixteen to twenty years, 4.1% have worked for between twenty-one to thirty years, while 2% have worked for between thirty-one to thirty-five years.

RESULTS

Table 6 shows the availability of copyrighted materials in the various libraries. The high rate of agreement to the items as indicated in Table 7 reveals that librarians are aware of copyright law and appreciate their role as protectors of copyrighted materials. Responses as shown

Table 2. Number of Questionnaire distributed and retrieved.

Name Of Library	Questionnaires distributed	questionnaires returned	Percentage
Babcock university	15	15	30.61
Bells university	8	5	10.21
Crescent university	4	3	6.12
Federal university of agriculture	21	20	40.82
Olabisi onabanjo university	15	6	12.24
Total	63	49	100

Table 3. Gender distribution of respondents.

Gender	Frequency	(%)
Male	17	34.7
Female	32	65.3
Total	49	100

Table 4. Educational qualification of respondents.

Educational qualification	Frequency	(%)
Bachelors	9	18.4
Masters	35	71.4
MPhil	1	2.0
PhD	4	8.2
Total	49	100

Table 5. Work experience of respondents.

Work Experience	Frequency	(%)
0-5	18	36.7
6-10	12	24.5
11-15	9	18.4
16-20	5	10.2
21-25	2	4.1
26-30	2	4.1
31-35	1	2
Total	49	100

Table 6. Availability of copyrighted materials in the library.

Availability of copyrighted materials	Available		Not available		Not sure	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Textbooks	49	100	-	-	-	-
Journals	49	100	-	-	-	-
Dissertation/ Thesis	46	93.9	3	6.1	-	-
Magazines/Newspapers	48	98	-	-	1	2
Compact disk/DVD	44	89.8	-	-	5	10.2
Cassette (audio/video)	26	53.1	10	20.4	13	26.5
Electronic databases	48	98	1	2	-	-
E-journals	48	98	-	-	1	2

Table 7. Librarians' roles in protection of copyright, and knowledge of copyright Law.

Role of librarians	SA		A		D		SD	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
There is need for librarians to have copyright education in order to familiarize themselves with the basic principles of copyright law.	33	67.35	16	32.65				
Knowledge of copyright law will enable librarians to render their services without violating copyright laws.	30	61.22	19	38.78				
It is the duty of librarians to protect users' rights.	29	59.18	20	40.82				
It is the duty of librarians to protect authors' rights.	23	46.94	21	42.86	5	10.20		
Librarians must provide the right guidance to their users on how to make use of library stock without infringing on the copyright of the authors.	25	51.02	24	48.98				
If there is the need to photocopy, the principle of fair use should be strictly adhered to.	26	53.06	23	46.94				
Fair use means that a user can copy a very small amount of a work for educational purposes and not for commercial purpose.	25	51.02	24	48.98				
It is not an infringement of copyright law if a portion of a document is copied for criticism and review or for reporting in the newspaper.	20	40.82	18	36.73	8	16.32	3	6.12
Any copying carried out for commercial purpose requires prior permission from the copyright owner.	23	46.94	23	46.94	3	6.12		
It is possible to obtain permission to copy or use copyrighted material by contacting the copyright owner.	17	34.69	27	55.10	5	10.2		
Abuse of copyright deprives the creator of gains accruing from his intellectual property.	26	53.06	21	42.86	2	4.08		

in Table 8 reveal that libraries have not exhausted the various measures to combat copyright infringement. Only 14.29% of librarians indicate that their libraries display copyright warnings in conspicuous locations in the library. Also, 30.61% indicated that their libraries' agreement with database providers are made available to users, while only 40.82% indicated that license agreement on database use are displayed prominently while users browse database content.

DISCUSSION

Information materials available in libraries such as textbooks, journals, dissertation/thesis, magazines/newspapers, Compact Disc/Digital Video Disks, cassettes, electronic databases, paintings, drawings, engravings, maps, photographs etc. are copyrighted materials. University libraries provide both copyrighted and public domain materials to its users in support of teaching, learning, research and scholarship. Librarians as custodians of information are charged with the responsibility of protecting the interests of copyright owners as well as the interests of users of information. The study found that librarians are aware of copyright law as it relates to their role as custodians of information. These findings however contrasts with the findings of

Dicen (2014) who found that librarians' awareness of copyright is low, and Charbonneau and Priehs (2014) who also found in their study that librarians are only fairly aware of copyright policies. The study also showed that librarians are adopting some measures to curtail infringement of copyright. However, they do not take exhaustive steps in discouraging library users from infringing copyright.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Copyright law gives protection to creators of information resources and also provide for a balance between promoting the users' right as well as creators' right. The roles of librarians who are the custodians of intellectual property made them important in the administration of copyright law. It is therefore recommended that:

1. Librarians need to create more awareness in order to ensure that libraries protect the rights of creators.
2. Librarians need to provide access to information for users based on balanced law.
3. Libraries should ensure that copyright warnings are displayed in conspicuous locations in the library.
4. Agreement between libraries and database providers should be made available to users to prevent them from

Table 8. Measures to combat copyright infringement.

Measures taken by library to curb copyright infringement	YES		NO		NOT SURE	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Copyright warnings are displayed in conspicuous locations in my library to pass the message across to the users.	7	14.29	37	75.51	5	10.20
Research projects are made available to researchers for consultation only.	43	87.76	3	6.12	3	6.12
Photocopying an entire work is not allowed in my library.	45	91.84	3	6.12	1	2.04
Librarians ensure that precise citation is done for any piece of information collected from the library.	32	65.31	9	18.37	8	16.33
Photocopying of entire journal is restricted in my library.	33	67.35	10	20.41	6	12.24
Agreement between libraries and database providers are made available to users.	15	30.61	24	48.98	10	20.41
License agreement on database use is displayed prominently while users browse content.	20	40.82	18	36.73	11	22.45
Copying ('dubbing') of multimedia resources (CD/DVD, Cassette) is prohibited in my library.	32	65.31	12	24.49	5	10.20
My library has a policy on copyright.	25	51.02	11	22.45	13	26.53

abusing copyright law.

5. Libraries should have policy on copyright. Every library worker and user should be educated in this regard in order to familiarize them with the copyright provision.

6. As copyright violation can easily be carried out in the libraries, librarians should be more intentional and aggressive in ensuring that copyright is not violated in the library by engaging all the available measures to ensure compliance.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interest.

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Full Length Research Paper

Student perception of electronic resources use in Rajshahi University Library: A case study

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The growing use of electronic resources in and outside the libraries has become a major issue of discussion all over the world. Information seekers, particularly students and teachers are becoming key proponents of e-resource use. Against this backdrop, this paper explores the pattern of e-resource use by undergraduate and post-graduate students of Rajshahi University – one of the oldest and largest universities in Bangladesh. Based on a questionnaire based survey, the paper comes up with some key findings on the e-resource use pattern by the students as well as some recommendations for increasing the use of e-resources in the coming days.

Key words: Electronic resources, libraries, Rajshahi University, Bangladesh, e-book, e-journal.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic resources (ER), more commonly known as e-resources, have gradually taken a central position in library collections all over the world. With the growing popularity of digital libraries, e-resources now form the major part of many library collections. With the emergence of new techniques and technologies, electronic information sources are becoming more and more important for the academic community and an awareness of these resources is of paramount importance to library development in the 21st century (Velmurugan, 2013; Akpojotor, 2016). The use of e-resources has created new opportunities as well as new challenges for library professionals as they are trying to come up with new techniques and approaches for managing their electronic collections and providing dynamic library services using a whole range of new technologies. The users, on their part, also are trying to cope with the changing situations by making diversified

use of electronic resources although many users are still skeptical about the real potentials of electronic resources. Besides, the adoption of e-resources and digital technologies has not been similar in all parts of the world, with developed countries making significant advances in this regard while many developing countries lag behind. Against this backdrop, exploring the nature and dimensions of e-resource use has become quite important, as it will help understand the significance of e-resources in library collections at present and in the future.

Electronic resources: Definition and nature

Simply said, e-resources are resources that are produced, preserved, managed, used and shared by electronic means.

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They require the use of additional tools including computers, e-book reader, smart phone, etc. IGI Global defines e-resources as 'all the information products that a library provides through a computer network. This includes electronic books and journals, bibliographic databases, and library website pages (IGI Global). Library of Congress defines e-resources as 'any work encoded and made available for access through the use of a computer. It includes data available by:

- (1) Remote access and
- (2) Direct access (Library of Congress).

From the viewpoint of International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), electronic resources refer to 'those materials that require computer access, whether through a personal computer, mainframe, or handheld mobile device. They may either be accessed remotely via the internet or locally (IFLA, 2012).' Today's library and information centres deal with a wide range of e-resources which include electronic journals, electronic books, full-text databases, indexing and abstracting services, reference databases, statistical databases, audio and visual materials and so on. With the proliferation of e-resources and their increasing use by a wide number of learners, libraries have been trying to make these resources available to their users. This has created some unique challenges for the libraries as well as an opportunity to serve their clients more effectively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been numerous studies on the use and impact of e-resources by various groups of users, viz. students, teachers, researchers, general information seekers, etc. These studies have focused on various aspects of e-resource use (including constraints and challenges faced by the users) and attempted to put forward recommendations for the improvement of e-resource use. Since it will be next to impossible to present a comprehensive picture of these studies, we will confine our literature review to a few representative studies from Bangladesh.

Islam and Habiba (2015) conducted a research on the e-resources use in a leading private university in Bangladesh and their research findings showed that, although the students and faculty members were generally satisfied with the quality of internet and e-resources, they also faced constraints like limited number of titles, difficulty in finding information, limited access to computers, slow download speed, etc. A study conducted by Mostafa (2013) on the use and impact of e-resources at some private university libraries in Bangladesh revealed that an increasing number of users are becoming dependent on e-resources for study and research purposes. However, the existing infrastructural facilities of the libraries were found to be adequate for

supporting optimum use of e-resources.

Islam and Mostafa (2013) suggested conducting an exhaustive survey to analyze the existing e-resources of different libraries of Bangladesh as well the infrastructural facilities and users needs. They also recommended for the formulation of an action plan based on the findings of the proposed study. Habiba and Chowdhury (2012) while analyzing the use of e-resource by the users of Dhaka University Library, one of the largest libraries in Bangladesh, found that, the frequency and volume of e-resource use are increasing gradually with the majority of the users consulting e-resources for learning and current information. Tabassum et al. (2015) identified lack of awareness, adequate manpower, infrastructural facilities, etc. as major obstacles for effective use of digital library resources and advocated for the development of physical and infrastructure, human resource development, user education programmes, etc. for improving the condition. By exploring the pattern of e-resource use by the students of Rajshahi University, this paper aims at:

- (1) Gaining an in-depth understanding of the acceptability and use pattern of e-resources by the students of one of the largest universities in Bangladesh.
- (2) Exploring the strengths and weaknesses of e-resource collection of Rajshahi University.
- (3) Putting forward recommendations for improving the e-resource collections and services by Rajshahi University.

METHODOLOGY

The University of Rajshahi, founded in July 1953, is one of the largest Universities in the country with the highest seat of learning in the northern region of Bangladesh. It has 33,200 students studying in 56 departments which are organized into 10 Faculties (Rajshahi University Diary, 2016). The present study is based on a questionnaire based survey of the students of the University of Rajshahi. It also reviewed a number of pertinent literatures. The study was carried out over a period of one month - February 2017. A structured questionnaire was served among 180 students of Rajshahi University. Of them, 138 students returned the duly filled-in questionnaire. While selecting the respondents, steps were taken to make sure that an equal representation of students from the Faculties of Arts, Science and Social Sciences is ensured. Respondents were chosen randomly from each faculty's department. 60 students were from each faculty. In some cases, it was necessary to clarify a few questions to the students where they were unsure of the question asked and its implications. The study findings were analyzed with the help of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 show the degree of participation by the respondents. Out of the 138 questionnaires served, only 6 were not returned. This indicated that the level of response was quite high. Table 2 show the frequency of library use by the respondents. It shows that the highest number of respondents visit the library 4 to 5 days a

Table 1. Degree of participation by the respondents.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	132	96.65
No	6	4.36

Table 2. Frequency of library use.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Everyday	24	17.39
4-5 days a week	63	46.65
1-3 days a week	42	30.43
Others	9	6.52

Table 3. Perception about usefulness of ERs for students.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very much useful	69	50
Useful	54	39.13
Only nominally useful	9	6.52
Not as useful as it is thought	3	2.17
Not at all useful	00	

week. They are followed by 30.43% of users, who visit the library 1 to 3 days a week. A sizable number of students (17.39%) visit the library everyday, which is quite encouraging.

Table 3 indicates that, the students' perception about the usefulness of electronic resources is very positive. Exactly half of the respondents believe that ERs are useful tool for study purposes. Another 39.13% respondents believe that ERs are useful. Only a very small fraction (2.17%) of students feel that ERs are not as useful as is generally thought. Another interesting finding of the survey is that, not a single respondent feel that ERs are not at all useful. Table 4 represents the use of ERs by category. The highest percentage of users (67.30%) use electronic books while websites are used by 45.65% students. The table indicates that e-journals and e-newspapers also are in good demand as they are used by a sizable number of respondents -32.61% and 30.43% respectively. Databases are used by the least number of respondents (13.04%).

Table 5 presents the perceived benefits of the ERs as indicated by the respondents. Most of them (58.68%) think that ERs' greatest merit is quick search and retrieval facility. Ease of use of the ERs is indicated as its greatest merit by 17.39% respondents. Other merits being preferred by the respondents include printing and reproduction (10.87%), remote access (10.87%) and opportunity for sharing (8.70%). Although the reliability of

websites as information source is questioned by many, Table 6 shows that, an excessively high percentage of the respondents (93.47%) consider websites as reliable source of information. Only 6.52% respondents have doubts about the reliability of websites as source of information (Table 6).

The respondents have divided opinions about the favourable characteristics of websites. Majority of the respondents (65.12%) maintain that, the favourability of the websites rests primarily on the fact that, they provide latest information. 20.93% respondents think, the fact that websites could be accessed from any place with an internet connection is the main reason of their favourability. The ease of use of the websites has been cited by 20.93% respondents as their most favourable feature (Table 7). As it has been previously indicated, only 9 of the 138 respondents view websites unfavourably as a source of information. Table 8 shows that the reasons of unfavourability of websites vary from false information provision (44.44%), difficulty of use (33.33%) and long time for loading.

Table 9 presents the perception of the respondents regarding the urgency of enriching the collection of electronic resources of Rajshahi University. It shows that, an overwhelming majority of respondents feel that the authority of Rajshahi University Library needs to take immediate steps for enriching its ER collection. Only a low percentage of students (6.52%) feel the opposite,

Table 4. Use of ERs by category.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
e-books	93	67.39
e-journals	45	32.61
e-newspaper	42	30.43
Websites	63	45.65
Databases	18	13.04

Table 5. Perception about benefits of using ERs.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Quick search and retrieval	81	58.68
Ease of use	24	17.39
Opportunities for sharing	12	8.70
Printing and reproduction	15	10.87
Remote access (could be read from remote location)	15	10.87
Others	3	2.17

Table 6. Perception about reliability of websites as source of information.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	129	93.47
No	9	6.52

Table 7. Favourable characteristics of websites.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Websites provide latest information	84	65.12
Websites are easy to use	18	13.95
Websites provides accurate information	12	9.30
Websites could be accessed from any place with an internet connection	27	20.93

Table 8. Unfavourable characteristics of websites.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Websites may provide false information	4	44.44
Websites are not easy to use for all	3	33.33
Websites may take a long time to load	2	22.22

Table 9. Perception about the urgency of enriching the digital collection of RU Library.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	129	93.48
No	9	6.52

Table 10. Reasons for enriching the digital collection of RU Library.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
It will help students excel in their studies	42	32.55
It will enhance the learning capacity of the students	51	39.53
It will enhance the career prospect for the students	21	16.59
It will help teacher impart better educations	6	4.65
It will enhance the ICT skills of the students	17	13.18

Table 11. Perception about the disadvantages of ERs.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
It is not cost-effective	15	10.87
It does not give the full satisfaction of reading	66	47.83
It is not easy to use	15	10.87
It is not suitable for all students	24	17.39
Its value is over-estimated, there is no real benefit in using ER?	3	2.17

Table 12. Opinions about ways for promoting the use of ERs.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
Allocate more budgets for procuring ER	120	86.96
Development skills and capacity of students and staffs	90	65.22
Raise awareness on the importance of ER	63	45.65
Undertake educational campaign	27	19.57
Digitize the existing print collection	15	10.87

that is, the urgency for enriching the ER collection of the library is not very acute.

Table 10 indicates the respondents' opinion about why the ER collection of RU Library should be enriched immediately vary widely. However, majority of the respondents (39.53%) think that it should be done to help students enhance their learning capabilities. Moreover, the second highest numbers of (32.55%) students feel that it will help students excel in their studies, while 16.59% believe that this will enhance the career prospects for RU students. The number of students who feel that enriching the ER collection of the library will help students acquire and upgrade the ICT skills constitute 13.18% of the respondents.

Table 11 presents the perceived disadvantages of the electronic resources as identified by the respondents. It shows that, the largest number of respondents (47.82%) feel that, the most notable disadvantage of ERs is that, it does not give the reader the full satisfaction of reading, which they find in printed materials. The second most notable disadvantage of the ERs (as perceived by the respondents) is that, it is not suitable for all kinds of students (17.39%). The cost-effectiveness and difficulty

of use of the ERs have been cited as its most notable disadvantage by an equal 10.87% of the respondents.

Table 12 presents the opinions of the respondents about how the use of electronic resources could be promoted among the students and other users of Rajshahi University Library. This shows that, a vast majority of the respondents feel that, the use of ERs could be promoted by allocating more budget for strengthening the ER collection. The opinion that has been expressed by the second highest number of respondents (65.22%) is skills and capacity development of library staff and students, which is followed by awareness raising on the importance of ERs. A sizable number of respondents have also advocated for undertaking educational campaign and digitizing the existing print collections, which have been suggested by 19.57 and 10.87% respondents respectively.

Table 13 presents the respondents' forecast about the trend of ER use by RU students in near future. It indicates that, more than half of the respondents (58.70%) think that the use of ERs by RU students will increase significantly in the near future, while 17.39% believe that it will increase marginally. Only 4.34%

Table 13. Perception about the proliferation of ER use by RU students in near future.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
It will increase substantially	81	58.70
It will increase marginally	24	17.39
It will remain the same as now	6	4.34
It will decrease marginally	3	2.17
It will decrease substantially	1	0.72
I have no idea	1	0.72

students think that it will remain at the present level. The number of students who think that it will actually decrease rather than increase is extremely low (0.72%), and similar percentage of students informed that they have no idea whether it will increase or decrease or remain the same.

DISCUSSIONS

The study has come up with some key findings, which provide interesting insights into the use of electronic resources by the students of the University of Rajshahi. It also helps understand the perceptions of the library users regarding the current and future trends of the use of electronic resources. The major findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

(1) The acceptability of electronic resources as a study tool is quite high among the students who took part in the survey. Approximately 90% of the respondents believe that ERs are either extremely or moderately useful for their study. Therefore, the university authority should take steps to promote the use of electronic resources by the students by investing more in building ER collection in the library.

(2) Although the issue of e-book use by students has drawn both positive and negative reactions from various quarters (Picton, 2014), the study finds that, students of Rajshahi University generally regard e-book favourably as study tools. Another interesting finding is that, they prefer websites to electronic journals as study tool. This is interesting because e-journals are generally thought to be more reliable source of information than websites. The use of databases by students is quite low, which is understandable, because usually faculty members and researchers are the main users of databases.

(3) One of the most important features of ERs as compared to print materials is quick and easy search and retrieval, which has been supported by the majority of the respondents. Therefore, the search and retrieval functions of the ERs should be made more effective so that their use could be further enhanced. The survey indicates that, the remote access facilities of the ERs should also be enhanced so that more students could use it for their study purposes.

(4) Although the reliability of websites as study tools has been questioned in many studies (Brandstorm, 2011; Sahin et al., 2010), websites are still preferred by many students for study purposes and this fact has been supported by the present study as well. However, it is advisable for the students to evaluate the reliability of the websites by judging their accuracy, currency, objectivity, scope, authority, authenticity, etc.

(5) The present study ascertains that the utility and potentials of electronic resources for helping students enhance their learning capacities is greatly appreciated by the students. This is why they rely on ERs for excelling in their studies and many students regard ERs as a facilitator of their career prospects. By focusing on this fact, the RU Library authority should take steps for enriching and diversifying the ER collection of the RU Library so that students can benefit more from these resources.

Conclusion

The use of electronic resources is on the rise all over the world. Against this backdrop, Bangladeshi university libraries also are enriching their ER collections in various ways. Rajshahi University has been in the forefront of this initiative through steadily building a stable and diversified ER collection and making these collections available to students, teachers and other users. The present study confirms that the students of Rajshahi University are fully aware of the significance of ERs and support this ongoing initiative of digitization and electronic collection building. Therefore, the University authority should step up their effort to enrich the electronic resource collection of RU Library under a well thought-out plan and long term policies. This will not only help the students and other library users get up-to-date knowledge and information, but will also contribute in the educational excellence of Rajshahi University.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) RU authority should allocate more budgets for strengthening the ER collection of the RU Library.

- (2) Besides, steps should be taken to upgrade the skills and competence of library staff so that they can offer better services to the users.
- (3) Moreover, steps like awareness raising on the importance of ERs among the users.
- (4) Large scale digitization of print materials, undertaking educational initiatives regarding ERs could also contribute in enhancing the use and acceptability of ERs.
- (5) A regular basis training, workshop on the usages of e-resources should be conducted faculty wise among the students.
- (6) A high speed of internet connection should be ensured.
- (7) The campus should be taken under Wi-fi in order to ensure the widespread use of the electronic library.
- (8) Uninterrupted power supply should be ensured campus wide.
- (9) Teachers should encourage students to use the electronic library materials.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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