

*Full Length Research Paper*

## Factors militating against the use of the internet by postgraduate students

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This study was designed to investigate the factors militating against the use of the Internet by Postgraduate Students of Library and Information Science, Delta State University, Abraka. The descriptive survey was employed as the research design in the study. The literature reviewed covered: internet resources and services, benefits of the internet, problem encountered while using the Internet and strategies to overcome the likely problems. 35 respondents represent the total population of postgraduate students of Library and Information Science, Delta State University, Abraka were used as the sample size of the study. The questionnaire was the instrument used in data collection from the respondents. A total number of 35 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the postgraduate students. The data were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage formula. The findings revealed that the e-mail, e-journal and online database were the Internet resources and services mostly used by the postgraduate students. The Internet is beneficial to postgraduate students but are faced with some militating factors such as; slow speed of server, power failure, high service charge and restricted access to site. The findings also revealed that the use of the Internet by students can be enhanced when there are; adequate Internet services, adequate power supply, subsidized charges and free access to sites. It is concluded and recommended that practical use of the Internet should be included as part of postgraduate students' curriculum in the Department of Library and Information Science; charges for such services should be subsidized especially in libraries where fee-based sites will be subscribed to augment the print services.

**Key words:** Internet, postgraduate, internet resources and services.

### INTRODUCTION

The Internet, since the last couple of years has become a major source for study, research and development. It is a vast network of computers that connect many of the world's businesses, institutions and individual. The Internet has become a hot issue in the field of Library and

Information study. It is an efficient tool for finding latest news, views, browse library catalogues, indexes, abstracts, exchange of information with colleagues and intellectuals, ideas with experts, join in lively debates or financial and business transactions instantly.

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The use of Internet has revolutionized the way and manner the global community source and use information. Students especially postgraduates are no longer restricted to print information materials to solve their state of the art information. Rather they depend on the Internet which according to Cisse (2004) places at the disposal of all gateways to various forms of information and the capacity to access them on a worldwide web (www) level. Such provision by the Internet enables postgraduate students to communicate with their colleagues, lecturers and friends with e-mail facilities, search or engage in discussion groups (Ajala, 2002; Ayoku, 2001; Jagboro, 2004).

### **Aim of the study**

The major aim of this study is to investigate the factors militating against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The primary data are derived from personal experience, discussion with colleagues etc. to get the idea about the factors; questionnaires were administered, responses were collected and the results were analyzed.

#### **Research design**

The descriptive survey method was adopted for this study because it seeks to explore the major factor that militates against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students of Library and Information Science, Delta State University, Abraka. This implies that the data collected were based on the problems associated with the Internet. Information provided by the respondents amounted to the researcher's findings.

#### **Sample and sampling techniques**

The entire population was used as the sample for the study due to the small number of postgraduate students involved.

#### **Research instrument**

The questionnaire titled: Factors militating against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students of Library and Information Science (FMAUIPSLIS) was used as the research instrument for this study. The questionnaire provided data on the factors that militate against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students of Library and Information Science, Delta State University, Abraka. This consists of five (5) sections which include; Section A, as the personal data, Section B, as the Internet resources and services used by postgraduate students, Section C, as the benefits postgraduate students derive from using the Internet, Section D, as the problems that militate against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students and Section E, as the strategies to overcome the likely problems. Open-ended type of questions was also used in order to allow respondents express their personal view of the question.

#### **Validity of the instrument**

The questionnaire used for this study was designed by the researcher; thereafter, critically reviewed and validated in order to ensure the face and content validity of the items.

#### **Reliability of the instrument**

The researcher adopted the test-retest method in establishing the reliability of the instrument. A sample size of ten (10) respondents comprising postgraduate students of Botany Department, Delta State University, Abraka, was used in the test-retest method. The same questionnaire was administered twice to the same respondents within a time interval of about two weeks.

#### **Method of data collection**

The questionnaire was distributed to the postgraduate students of Library and Information Science, Delta State University, Abraka. The researcher administered the questionnaire one-on-one to the students in order to get their immediate response. This method was preferred so as to achieve high response rate.

### **PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Internet resources and services**

Internet is one of the vital tools used for education and research these days. The more the scholars get exposed to the Internet and its applications, the more they start relying on its services. Bride (2004) revealed that despite the massive quantity of information that is available on the Net, finding the things that interest you is not usually difficult as a result of Internet resources. E-mail and Internet services are new services that have been used by students. Table 1 shows the result of the analysis of the internet resources mostly used by postgraduate students.

From Table 1, the data revealed that 23(65.71%) of the respondents uses e-mail, 13(37.14%) uses e-journal, 7(20%) uses e-book, 14(40%) uses online database, 5(14.28%) uses digital archive, 6(17.14%) uses e-thesis and 2(5.71%) uses mailing lists. It was observed from the table that the Internet resources and services mostly used by postgraduate students are; e-mail 23(65.71%), e-journal 13(37.14%) and online database 14(14%). While the mailing lists have the lowest frequency 2(5.71%) this indicates that only a few of the postgraduate students use the mailing lists. They prefer the chosen internet resources and service because of their fast accessibility and it is used at least 'weekly'. This was due to their level of skillfulness in them.

#### **Benefits of the Internet**

The Internet is the global connection between computers that allow students especially postgraduates to send mail. The Internet is commonly called 'the network of networks'. The Internet is a public resource which means that only user or server on the Internet can connect to other users, no one owns the Internet. The Internet according to Igwela (2006) as quoted by Obokoh (2009) is the biggest multimedia ever created that has influenced the operational functions and activities of modern day institution. The benefits are so great that there is no sphere of life without an Internet application. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 revealed that a large number of 25(71.42%) respondents are of the opinion that the Internet is 'more informative' as compared to conventional documents; this is because the respondents use it

**Table 1.** Internet resources and services mostly used by postgraduate students.

| Internet resources and services | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| E-mail                          | 23        | 65.71          |
| E-journal                       | 13        | 37.14          |
| E-book                          | 7         | 20             |
| Online database                 | 14        | 40             |
| Digital archive                 | 5         | 14.28          |
| E-thesis                        | 6         | 17.14          |
| Mailing lists                   | 2         | 5.71           |

**Table 2.** The benefits derived from using the Internet.

| Benefits         | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Time saving      | 19        | 54.28          |
| More informative | 25        | 71.42          |
| More preferred   | 9         | 25.71          |
| More useful      | 9         | 25.71          |
| Speedy delivery  | 18        | 51.42          |
| Less expensive   | 7         | 20             |

(Internet) to support their studies which cannot be denied.

#### Factors that militate against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students

The Internet has made changes in almost all aspects of lives as it plays a significant role in most of what we discuss today about access to dissemination and retrieval of information (Chachage, 2001). The Internet as an information superhighway is not used as it ought to be used due to certain militating factors as shown in Table 3.

The data in Table 3 revealed that slow speed of server 20 (57.14%), Power failure 19(54.29%), high service charge 13 (37.14%) and restricted access to sites are the major problems that militate against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students of Library and Information Science, Delta State University, Abraka.

#### Strategies to overcome the likely problems

According to Tenopir (2003), one of the strategies to overcome the problems on the use of the Internet by students is the reduction of cost of services rendered, which may discourage the use of such services. This cost should be hidden from users to boost users' morale, if not, any overt charge per-use or per-view for electronic resources has a resultant impact on users' behaviour. The table shows the strategies on how the likely problems can be solved.

The data in Table 4 revealed that adequate power supply 21(60%), adequate Internet services 18(51.43%) respectively and subsidized charges 13(37.14%) were the main strategies suggested by the respondents to overcome the likely problems against their effective use of the Internet.

#### Research findings

Based on the information given by the respondents, the following

were the findings:

1. The Internet resources and services mostly used by postgraduate students are; e-mail, e-journal and online database. This was due to their fast accessibility.
2. The Internet is 'more informative as they use it to support their studies and for communication.
3. Despite the benefits of the Internet, they are being militated by; slow speed of server, power failure, high service charge and restricted access to sites.
4. The only ways these problems can be solved is by providing adequate Internet services, adequate power supply, subsidized charges and free access to sites.

#### DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings revealed that the Internet resources and services mostly used by postgraduate students are; e-mail, e-journal and online database, only a few uses the e-book, digital archive, e-thesis and mailing lists. According to Maharana (2010), it is evident that a major portion of students are 'experts' in sending and receiving e-mail, while only a few are beginners in using Internet resources and services. It also indicates that the postgraduate students use the Internet resources and services because of its fast accessibility, low cost and an additional contribution that it meets their information needs, but majority of them uses it because of its fast accessibility and it is used at weekly basis. This is due to their level of skillfulness as some are more skilled and some are not. The findings also explore that a large number of the postgraduate students feel and are of the opinion that the Internet is 'more informative' as compared to conventional documents, while some opined that the Internet is 'time saving', speedy delivery, 'more preferred' and more useful to support their studies which cannot be denied.

From the findings, it is quite clear that the major factors/problems that militate against the use of the Internet by postgraduate students are; slow speed of server, power failure, high service charge and restricted access to sites. The findings agree with Rosenberg's (2005) that speed and reliability of Internet connection is a major challenge faced by students in retrieving re-sources, also in line with Adomi et al. (2004) which discovered that slow Internet response hampers Internet services. Internet

**Table 3.** Problems militating against effective use of the Internet.

| Problems                                  | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Slow speed of server                      | 20        | 57.14          |
| High service charge                       | 13        | 37.14          |
| Difficulty in locating needed sites       | 6         | 17.14          |
| Poor environment                          | 7         | 20             |
| Power failure                             | 19        | 54.29          |
| System breakdown                          | 6         | 17.14          |
| Poor knowledge on how to use the Internet | 5         | 14.29          |
| Insufficient workstation                  | 5         | 14.29          |
| Hardware failure                          | 4         | 11.43          |
| Incomplete accessories like disk drive    | 5         | 14.29          |
| Restricted access to sites                | 12        | 34.29          |
| Time constraint                           | 7         | 20             |

**Table 4.** Ways the problems can be solved.

| Solutions                                       | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Adequate Internet services                      | 18        | 51.43          |
| Adequate power supply                           | 21        | 60             |
| Subsidized charges                              | 13        | 37.14          |
| Adequate qualified personnel to assist students | 7         | 20             |
| Free access to sites                            | 18        | 51.43          |
| Other                                           | 1         | 2.86           |

could take up to 5 min or more to open a particular web page. Power outages are problems militating against information/Internet provision and use in African countries (Adomi et al., 2003; Adomi et al., 2005; Adomi, 2010).

Finally, the findings revealed that majority of the postgraduate students suggested that the major strategies to overcoming the likely problems are; adequate Internet services, adequate power supply, free access to sites and subsidized charges. However, additional contribution was made: High bandwidth for easy flow of information. They are in affirmation that majority of the strategies if put in place will ameliorate some of the problems that militate against their effective use of the Internet.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is obvious that postgraduate students of Library and Information Science need to do more in order to improve on their level of usage of the Internet so as to enable them source for materials to support their studies. The slow speed of server, power failure and restricted access to sites could be seen as discouraging factors but then can be overcome and enhanced if the following recommendations are implemented.

1. Charges for Internet services should be subsidized by

cyber café managers or those in charge of such services by reducing the price per hour to an affordable price; for instance, from ₦100 to ₦80.

2. Universities should provide Internet services especially in libraries where fee-based sites will be subscribed to augment the print services; this can be achieved by computerizing or possibly automating their libraries.

3. The government should equip schools with the enabling infrastructure such as adequate power supply; by providing alternative power supply like the generator or plant, effective Internet connectivity i.e. Internet services with high response rate that will encourage usage by students.

4. The practical use of Internet should be included as part of postgraduate students' curriculum in the institution by taking the students to the computer laboratory for an hour or less to instruct them on the basic steps to follow when searching for information online.

## Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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