

Utilization of Electronic Resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities: Challenges and Solutions**Dr Salisu Adamu Aliero¹, Abdurashid Allami²**¹University Library, Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, Nigeria²Information and Communication Technology Department, Faculty of Engineering, Kebbi State University of Science and Technology, Aliero, Nigeria***Corresponding author***Dr Salisu Adamu Aliero***Article History***Received: 15.09.2017**Accepted: 20.09.2017**Published: 30.09.2017***DOI:**

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**Abstract:** This paper centred on the utilization of electronic resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities. The paper highlighted the types and importance of electronic resources in teaching and learning of Islamic Studies. It discussed the challenges faced by staff and students in the utilization of such resources. Possible solutions to the challenges were proffered. This is followed by conclusion and recommendations.**Keywords:** electronic resources, recommendations, Islamic Studies**INTRODUCTION**

Islam as a dynamic religion and a complete way of life touches every aspect of human life. The essence of this all-encompassing approach to human life is to ensure the development of a man who will be able to effectively and efficiently function in the ever changing world. In order to prepare and adequately equip man to function and compete favourably in the changing world and circumstances, therefore, Islam enjoins him to first and foremost seek for knowledge. This is based on recognition of the fact that it is only through knowledge that human intellect can be fully developed, worthwhile innovations for optimum productivity can be initiated, increased creativity can be assured, and comfort and betterment of life can be attained and sustained.

Basically, when Islam enjoins Muslims to seek for knowledge, it does not necessarily limit its scope to practices of rituals and other Islamic festivities. The commandments are so open and all-encompassing that they allow and encourage Muslims to seek for knowledge that will be in the best interest and service to Islam in particular and humanity in general.

In the contemporary world, advancement in science and technology has drastically affected every aspect of human life. Consequently, computer and other electronic resources have come to play a vital role in the world educational system. Based on this development, the use of computer and other electronic resources continue to expand in universities. As these electronic resources are increasingly gaining prominence in universities therefore, academic staff and students are increasingly expected to utilize them for the attainment of their educational goals. Since the emergence of electronic resources cuts across all disciplines, utilization of those on Islamic Studies by staff and students is indispensable. This is because they play prominent role in facilitating access to information for improving teaching, learning and research activities. In the course of utilizing these resources, users faced some challenges. Therefore, this paper examined the challenges faced in the utilization of electronic information resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities. The paper proposed some useful solutions to the challenges and offered some recommendations on how to improve utilization of electronic information resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities for attainment of academic excellence.

Types of Electronic Resources on Islamic Studies**CD ROMs:** Small plastic optical disks used as a publishing medium and for storing information in digital format.**CASSETTES:** Small flat plastic cases containing tape for playing or recording music or sound.**WEBSITES:** Group of related, interlinked web pages installed on a web server and accessible 24hrs a day to internet users equipped with browser software.**ONLINE DATABASES:** Large, regularly updated files of digitized information (bibliographic records, abstracts, full text documents, directory entries, images, etc.) related to a specific subject or field, consisting of

records of uniform format organized for ease and speed of search and retrieval and managed by database management system.

Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC): A database composed of bibliographic records describing the books and other materials owned by a library, accessible via public terminals.

E-books: A digital version of traditional print books designed to be read on a personal computer or an e-book reader.

E-Journals: A digital version of print journals or a journal-like electronic publication with no print counterpart, made available via the web, e-mails or other means of internet access.

E-libraries: Libraries in which a significant proportion of the resources is available in machine-readable format and is accessible by means of computer. The contents may be locally held or accessed remotely via computer networks.

Importance of Electronic Resources in Teaching and Learning of Islamic Studies

The importance of electronic resources in teaching and learning of Islamic Studies are summarized as follows:

Availability of Vast Information Resources

Seeking for knowledge in Islam is considered a fundamental responsibility of a believer which he is expected to acquire wherever he finds it. Accordingly, the quest for Muslims to seek for knowledge indicates that knowledge could be sought from anywhere as long as it is beneficial to *Ummah*. Interestingly, today, the world is increasingly turning into a global village. Information that could hardly be accessed in the past can now be conveniently retrieved in abundance via electronic resources. These resources hold vast information in every sphere of life. The implication of this according to Kolawole [1] is that as knowledge seekers, Muslims patronize these resources in order to satisfy their quest for knowledge in all aspects of human endeavours thereby fulfilling a religious obligation which encourages the search for knowledge through the length and breadth of the world.

Imparting knowledge/Information Dissemination

As Islam enjoins Muslims to seek for knowledge, so also it enjoins them to impart such knowledge to their immediate community and the world at large. This is pertinent because, it is through acquisition of knowledge and imparting it to others that the goals of Islam of developing a balanced personality could be actualized and sustained.

In Islam, imparting knowledge or disseminating information is of utmost importance to Muslims in particular and the entire humanity at large. Since Islam is a universal religion and requires universal approach in disseminating its teachings, therefore, the use of electronic resources becomes indispensable.

Electronic resources provide Muslims with unprecedented opportunities for disseminating the message of Islam to the world as enjoined by Allah (S.W.T.) and prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).

Facilitation of Teaching and Learning

Advancement in science and technology has now made it possible to develop some softwares that are made available for effective teaching and learning of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language. Oloyede [2] observes that the *Turath-Arabic* as a second language software can be used effectively to teach or learn Arabic within some months, while *al-Qamusun natiq* which provides in both audio and visual forms, variety of series is considered a good companion for modern users of Arabic. This facility provides unique opportunity for Arabic learners to have several drills at any time in order to master the language with ease.

Promotion of Qur'anic Studies

Electronic resources today serve as aids for teaching, learning and research in the field of Qur'anic studies. Blake [3] buttresses that one can learn *Qira'at* (modes of recitation of the Qur'an), and *Tajwid* (science of Qur'anic recitation or proper Qur'anic recitation). Students can access several translations or interpretations of the Qur'an on the Internet. This enables students to read and compare different interpretations, use search functions to quickly locate passages on topics of interest, view the Arabic text, read it in translation and/or hear Qur'anic recitation.

Similarly, Blake [3] reveals that searchable, full text interpretations of the Qur'an by reputable scholars are available through the Internet in hypertext format. A Muslim group in the U.K. maintains a site at <http://www.quran.org.uk/> that provides links to eight different English interpretations of the Qur'an, including widely used versions by Marmaduke pickthal, M.H. Shakir and Yusuf Ali, etc.

Additionally, the Muslim Student Association at University of Southern California maintains a helpful site that enables students to compare different interpretations of the Qur'an on line by line basis. The online version includes

useful introduction to each *surah*, with information about the *surah*'s name, a discussion of historical events related to the texts, and exegesis of the *surah*'s themes.

Promotion of Hadith Studies

According to Blake [3], a large amount of materials from various *Hadith* collections, records of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) words and deeds are available electronically. The Muslim Association at the University of Southern California has put reputable, full text translations of Hadith collections by al-Bukhari and Malik's *Al-Muwatta* online through the following address <http://www.usc.edu/dep/MSA/fundamentals/hadithsunnah>. Bukhari's Hadith is also available at <http://www.cco.caltech.edu/calmsa/sahih.html>.

This site also contains partial translations of Hadith collections by two other Hadith Scholars; Muslim and Abu-Dawud. Since these collections are arranged by topic-revelations, ablution; Friday prayer, witnesses, manumission of slaves, etc, students can easily locate sections of interest.

Promotion and Dissemination of the Knowledge of Fiqh

Another importance of electronic resources is promotion and dissemination of the knowledge of *Fiqh*. Kolawole [1] reveals that extensive collections of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) are available online. In addition to *Maliki's al-Muwatta*, students can access readable translations of *Fiqh* books written by Imam Shafi'I, Iman al-Nawawi, etc. The proper dissemination of the knowledge of *Fiqh* electronically will enhance better understanding of Islam by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Facilitation of Da'wah

The emergence of electronic resources has given the Muslims a golden opportunity for *da'wah*, that is invitation to Islam. Ruma and Sheik [4] opine that by using electronic resources, Muslims can propagate Islamic religion to people of different nations, races and tribes. For instance, the development of online *khutubahs* (sermons), either transmitted live or recorded and uploaded by several Imams. Similarly, the growing number of online seminars, conferences, workshops and discussions are some of the things that are significantly contributing to the rise of Muslims and Islam.

In recognition of the relevance of electronic resources in the propagation of Islam in Nigeria, several television channels such as Sunnah TV, Manara TV and Wisal Hausa TV are not only promoting the correct understanding of Islam but also attracting and convincing a lot of non-Muslims to convert to Islam.

Promotion of Muslim Unity

The emergence and development of electronic resources is increasingly promoting the unity of Muslims locally and internationally. Ruma and Sheik [4] observe that people who could not have otherwise known or seen one another are now coming together in cyberspace. Thus, people from distant places can be on a single platform to discuss, deliberate and debate on a wide range of topical issues affecting Muslim *Ummah*. With this development, the barrier of time and space have, to a certain extent been reduced. This has certainly contributed immensely in promoting the unity of the *Ummah*.

Additionally, with the advent of electronic resources such as e-mail, voice-mail, text, video-conferencing, Internet, chat rooms, net-phone programmes, virtual reality systems, etc, Islamic scholars located in different parts of the world can come together relatively easily and inexpensively to discuss any problems or challenges affecting the Muslim *Ummah*.

Facilitation of Teaching and Learning of Mirath Sharing

It is interesting to note that Muslim students and researchers are developing softwares on the calculation of shares in *mirath* (inheritance in Islamic law) to compliment the traditional method of calculation. A good example as revealed by Oloyede [5] is the software developed by the Department of Religions, University of Ilorin which is tagged "UnilorinShari'ah Key Board I". In a related development, Allami [6] also wrote a project titled "Design of Islamic Inheritance Distribution System". The software was designed in such a way that once the name of the deceased, his assets and details of the heirs are entered, the share for every heir will be computed correctly. This facility will, to some extent reduce the problems of *mirath* sharing among *Ummah*.

Facilitation of Online Publishing

One of the problems faced by scholars and researchers, particularly in Nigeria is decadence of publishing industries. This was attributable to factors such as pervasive poverty, dearth of good readership, decadence in the education sector, low authorship, among others. However, with the emergence of electronic resources, online publishing has dramatically changed and transformed the pattern of publishing.

Nowadays, the fear of where to publish is addressed through online publishing facilitated by the electronic resources. Sheriff [7] posits that students can use desktop publishing to produce their materials. It produces high quality printing, using technologies from graphic design, typography and printing and spread/sheet. It also allows insertion, manipulation and calculation of data and figures by using worksheets and formula to convert graphical representations like graph and charts and display the input information in an appropriate format.

Facilitation of E-mail Services

As the name suggests, e-mails is the means of sending or receiving messages electronically. For instance, a book or journal article or any written message can easily be attached to an e-mail message for safe delivery to a destination. The message can instantly be received anywhere and at any time. Thus through e-mail services, correspondence among Muslims is highly facilitated. Similarly through the medium professional colleagues could easily be reached from any part of the world.

Acquisition of New Skills

Unquestionably, the emergence of electronic resources in Nigerian University libraries has necessitated the acquisition of new skills not only by library staff but also by all researchers and students, students and scholars of Islamic Studies are inclusive. This is very necessary not only for the students of Islamic studies to be able to effectively and efficiently use the electronic resources for the attainment of academic excellence, but also for the propagation of Islam as well as facilitating and or promoting their employability in the global and increasingly competitive labour market.

The Islamic Studies students in particular and Muslim in general must understand and master their environment if they are to find ways to continue to be relevant as well as fulfill and carry out their mission in the world today. For one to enhance his or her employability in the contemporary and competitive world, Tiwari [8] reiterates that cultivating an expertise in the utilization of electronic resources matters a lot. This is further buttressed by Goodson and Mangan [9] who observe that electronic resources will dominate the workplace of the future, and learners must therefore have some knowledge of how electronic resources function, in order to be comfortable and competent in such a workplace.

Challenges of Utilization of Electronic Resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities

The Challenges of Utilization of Electronic Resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities are enumerated and discussed below:

Inadequate Electronic Resources on Islamic Studies

Obviously, the databases subscribed to by the Universities have not adequately covered all the areas on Islamic Studies. Some of the databases such as BIOONE, AGORA, HINARI, Science Direct, Ebscohost, etc contained nothing on Islamic Studies.

Consequently, users of electronic information resources on Islamic Studies rely heavily on free electronic resources to address their information needs. Additionally, the CD-ROMs and cassettes on Islamic Studies that were available for use were grossly inadequate. On many instances, interested staff and students have to book for the materials before they have access to them. Many of the materials have either faded or worn out due to over use or out-datedness.

The coverage of Islamic Study courses is very scanty as far as the databases subscribed by the University are concerned. Some Librarians have been trying their best to ensure that the Universities subscribe to databases that adequately cover all aspect of Islamic Studies. This is because it is the surest way of enabling the staff and students to have access to adequate and up-to-date materials that will help them produce qualitative research works.

Inadequate Computers

Inadequate computers in the central and faculty Libraries of the universities is another serious challenge faced by users of electronic resources on Islamic Studies. Even though some appreciable attempts were made by the universities to procure more computers, particularly under the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) Interventions, the need for more computers is still obvious. Students have to queue up to access computers, most especially at the beginning and end of semesters or sessions.

Tyssi [10] observes that “in many government owned schools, computers are not enough for the large population of students.” This problem of inadequacy of computers was highlighted by Sani [11] who warns that the benefits of electronic resource utilization will be of limited use in achieving goals if they are not available to all staff and students as at the right time. The reason for inadequacy of computers is that some of them are out-dated and therefore

required upgrading while some developed technical problems and were awaiting repairs. This is why in some universities students are allowed to use their laptop computers in the Library.

Erratic Power Supply

Generally, erratic power supply is another serious challenge faced not only in the utilization of electronic resources on Islamic Studies but also in other disciplines. It is common knowledge that access to electronic resources requires uninterrupted power supply for twenty four hours *per* day. Regrettably, however, power supply in Nigerian universities is increasingly epileptic even though Libraries need reliable power to provide access to electronic resources.

According to Kolawole [1] another major challenge that confronts the utilization of electronic resources in accessing and disseminating Islamic teachings is the incessant power outage in Nigeria. Although, there are various cyber-cafes where teachers and students can access information electronically, the problem of power outage has been a serious setback in the effective use of electronic resources.

It is common knowledge that in Nigeria, electricity supply is too irregular and too inconsistent, no serious minded Librarian will rely on Power Holding Company of Nigeria to achieve goals. The persistent fluctuation of power does not only affect the electronic information provision but also the facilities used to provide the services. Lack of stable and reliable power supply is still an obstacle that must be given priority for access to electronic information resources to be efficient and effective in Nigerian universities.

Poor Bandwidth

The problem of bandwidth is another challenge in the universities under study. Subscription to bandwidth is too expensive and some service providers allocate shared bandwidth to subscribers instead of the dedicated one. As a result, the network is fluctuating, very slow, weak or completely absent. Several attempts made to ensure provision of dedicated bandwidth proved abortive in view of the complex nature of the facility.

Reliable service provision can only be assured when there is adequate bandwidth and the moment it expires universities begin to face a lot of problems with users. Many librarians are facing this problem. As long as the issue of bandwidth is not well understood and addressed, electronic resource users will continue to face challenge.

Changing Nature of Information Technologies

The dynamic nature of electronic resources is one of the most serious challenges being faced not only by users of electronic resources on Islamic Studies, but also users of similar resources on other disciplines.

According to Zhang [12], quickly out-dated technologies make electronic resources inaccessible. This is because web pages go up and down frequently and this has made it very difficult for staff and students to use, cite, and publish electronically. He emphatically stresses that:

The main issue I see is permanence. It is too often the case that a site is located, maybe even bookmarked, and then it is gone in a fairly short time. Because of the volatile nature of electronic information resources, users are at their mercy. It is common knowledge among staff and students that familiarity with one information system does not mean familiarity with another.

Availability of Too Much Information

It is a well-known fact that the emergence of electronic information resources has given rise to proliferation of information in almost all disciplines. Even though this development has increased access to information, however, too much information in some areas has sometime made it difficult for some users of electronic resources on Islamic Studies to select the materials that are relevant to their needs. One of the disadvantages of electronic information resources is that they provide users with too much information to the extent that you need to sort through the vast amounts of information to find out what is useful.

On several occasions, one finds himself in a fix because of abundance of too much information. The more one searches in some areas, the more information he finds to the extent that sometime it is difficult to decide on the information that best addresses one's needs. Because of this, some users would rather use traditional printed sources than read them on the screen.

Language Barrier

It is common knowledge that most of the electronic information resources are produced in English Language. It is believed that the mastery of the ICT language is essential if one is to efficiently and effectively utilize electronic information resources. It is also believed that failure to master the ICT standard lingua-franca, which is English, can also cause, or serve as a barrier for accessing and utilizing the electronic resources. While some technologies such as Fax, Audio and Video can be used with any language, Rose [13] posits that other prominent technologies such as internet and browser, etc. require some knowledge of English in order to benefit from the technology.

Additionally, Abdul-Salam [14] explains that chatislam.com which opens chatroom for a user who is ready to chat only with English may not interest any student who is only versed in Arabic but cannot communicate fluently in English language. This is a major challenge for Muslim users who are not literate in English to search for information. Conversely, there are some educative websites which have important topics in Arabic such as *Fiqh* and *Fatawa* pages of al-islam.com are in Arabic.

The opportunity to retrieve information from these Arabic websites will elude anyone who doesn't have the knowledge of Arabic language. Unquestionably, language barrier usually causes frustration in the use of electronic information resources. Many users are disappointed due to their inability to utilize electronic information resources as a result of language barrier.

Time Consumption

Time consumption is another challenge faced by academic staff and students of Islamic Studies in the utilization of electronic resources. It has been observed that addiction to electronic information resource utilization makes users lose control of their time or become poor time managers. On several occasions, users of electronic resources spend most of their time browsing, downloading, uploading, e-mailing, face-booking, viewing, charting, etc. On many instances, some of them go to bed at night very late. Consequently, they wake up late, lose morning congregational prayers and attend other essential schedules late or even lose them completely.

As far as electronic resource utilization is concerned, many students are not time conscious. They waste a lot of time trying to search for even things that have no relevance to their studies. Some students even waste their time playing games, chatting, face-booking, twitting, etc. In fact, some students do not even take their lectures seriously because of their addiction to electronic resources.

Lecturers' Attitudes towards Electronic Information Resources

Naturally, to a great extent, lecturers' attitudes toward any instructional materials determine its utilization by students. Unfortunately, however, even though electronic information resources are increasingly becoming indispensable in Nigerian universities, the attitudes of some lecturers towards their utilization seem to be a barrier.

This is because, as Hassan [15] observes even though computer machines and other electronic information resources are sold everywhere and government at local, state and federal levels are sponsoring courses and workshops in this vain, some of the lecturers were not fully conversant with the facilities throughout their academic career. Thus, they neither used them during their studies nor in their instructional activities.

Librarians' Attitudes

The non-chalant attitudes of some Library staff that are responsible for using electronic information resources to provide services are some of the challenges faced by the groups under study. On several occasions, the Library staffs are not ready to cooperate with Library users. Some of them are not readily available to assist Library users to address their information needs. In fact, the attitudes of some Librarians are very hash. Instead of them to assist by helping users to find the information or materials that they need, they claim that they have no time or the materials are not available. This attitude is discouraging many of users from using or learning how to utilize electronic information resources.

White [16] regrets that the attitude of the Librarian puts database increasingly into the hands of people who are un-equipped to search them, but also do not necessarily know how un-equipped they are. The impression created by this unfortunate attitude is that anyone can find not only the right information but also the best information by simply sitting down at a computer terminal. As a result of this, Librarians have unfortunately promoted and encouraged the misconception by their own insistence that end users search for themselves and to stop bothering the "busy" Librarians. In this exercise, end users may or may not find the "correct" information, but they may also find huge quantities of information which is for them, irrelevant or misleading.

Solutions to the Challenges of Utilization of Electronic Information Resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities

Obviously, numerous challenges are faced by users of in electronic information resource utilization on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities. The solutions to these challenges are enumerated and discussed below:

Creating Public Awareness

First and foremost, for users of electronic information resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities to appreciate the numerous benefits or advantages of utilizing such resources for the improvement of their academic performance, attainment of academic excellence, the institutions need to embark on creating public awareness.

The purpose of this is, to adequately sensitize the academic communities on the availability, and importance or relevance of electronic information resource utilization in their particular educational pursuit as well as other aspects of their life. This is very necessary, because it is only when people are aware of the availability and importance or relevance of any instructional materials to their educational pursuit that they will appreciate the need to utilize it. Various strategies for creating public awareness include orientation, user education, workshop, library bulletin, and notice boards.

Eugenia [17] suggests that libraries can create awareness among their clients of information networks, their contents and potential use. They can help clients who have poor network skills to access resources of information on the network, know what facilities are available, what services exist to facilitate use and encourage those who have never used the facilities to use them.

Attaining Proficiency in Information Literacy

Undoubtedly, attaining proficiency in information literacy by users is another most important step in addressing the challenges they faced in electronic information resource utilization on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities.

This is pertinent because, no matter the adequacy of computers, no matter the sufficiency of bandwidth and no matter the availability of databases and other facilities, it is only when users of electronic information resource are proficient in the utilization of such resources that they will be able to significantly derive maximum benefits from the

Provision of Adequate Computers

Computers as important components of ICT are critical in the utilization of electronic information resources. That also to a greater extent depends on their adequacy. Therefore, in order to address the common problem of inadequacy of computers in Nigerian Universities, the authorities concerned need to provide more computers in the university libraries.

This can be achieved through improved funding from the proprietors, use of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (Tetfund) Interventions, donations from philanthropists, governmental and non-governmental organizations, etc. The Universities can also procure computers and sell them to both staff and students on a loan or at a subsidized rate.

Provision of Adequate Electronic Information Resources on Islamic Studies

Another important strategy in addressing the challenges in the utilization of electronic resources on Islamic Studies is provision of adequate electronic information resources. The universities need to subscribe to databases and online resources that not only contain information on Islamic Studies but also extensively cover all areas of the religion. To achieve this, Islamic scholars, research centres and institutes can constructively develop databases that extensively and logically cover all areas of Islamic Studies. This is quite possible because Hassan [15] reveals that Muslims were even part of the original builders as software engineers and programmers. Muslims began mailing list, newsgroup, chat-lines, and Webpages about Islam.

Furthermore, in addition to the existing websites on Islamic Studies, Muslim organizations, research centres, institutes and individuals can develop more websites on Islamic Studies. The websites should be regularly up-dated in order to ensure provision of authentic, current and up-to-date information.

Provision of Stable and Sustainable Energy Source

Unquestionably, since utilization of electronic information resources is heavily dependent on the availability of electricity, its stable and sustainable provision will definitely address one of the major challenges faced not only by users of electronic resources on Islamic Studies but also other users of such resources on other disciplines.

Nigerian Universities should ensure that they provide stable, uninterruptable and sustainable power supply in order to enable users to utilize electronic information resources at their convenience. To achieve this, therefore, Thuree

[18] suggests total overhauling of Power Holding Company of Nigeria towards improving power generation and distribution. In addition to regular payment of electrical bills, the universities can procure heavy duty generators for the libraries. Alternatively, the universities can provide solar energy or wind energy in order to ensure stable and uninterrupted power supply.

Provision of Sufficient Bandwidth

Provision of sufficient bandwidth in Nigerian Universities will to a great extent go a long way in addressing the challenges faced in electronic information resource utilization. This can be achieved if the universities can allocate a reasonable amount of funds to procure dedicated bandwidth from reliable service providers. For instance, in order to ensure efficient and effective access to electronic information resources, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto subscribed to bandwidth worth millions of naira. This has substantially improved access to electronic information resources in the University. If other universities can follow suit, access to electronic information resources will significantly improve in the institutions.

In addition, the universities can provide fibre-optic in order to improve access to electronic information resources. The experiment of fibre-optic made by the University of Ilorin has significantly improved access to electronic information resources in the institution. Similarly, the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria connected all its campuses with fibre-optic in order to improve access to electronic information resources.

Continued In-service Training

In order to cope with the changing nature of electronic information resources, the academic staff and students of Islamic Studies need to continue to be at the forefront in learning and even teaching how to utilize the new technologies respectively. This is necessary because, electronic information resources will undoubtedly continue to change and academic staff and students of Islamic Studies are expected to continue to use the ever changing electronic resources to meet their information needs as well as promote Islamic education.

Departments of Islamic Studies need to be organizing seminars, conferences or workshops to abreast members of new developments in new information and communication technology products. Staff can also be sponsored to attend local and international conferences on electronic information resource utilization. Continued training is very necessary because, in addition to acquiring skills to access information and resources, one should have the ability to search into a range of options from which to make choices and one should have the decision making power to select the best from such resources.

Acquisition of Information Selection Skills

Evidently, the emergence of electronic information resources has led to information explosion. As such, some academic staff, researchers and students find it difficult to select the most appropriate or relevant information that will satisfy their specific needs. To appropriately deal with this challenge, therefore, the academic staff and students of Islamic Studies need to have information sifting or selection skills. In order to ensure that staff and students access the most relevant information, the Library staff in charge of using electronic resources to provide services can play a very critical role. He can engage users in reference dialogue in order to fully understand what they actually require. Through reference dialogue, the Librarian will not only make sure that users not only have the best information but also that what they found is the best information that could be found. Dealing with this requires that one should have the ability to sift the chaff from wheat. Staff and students should be critical readers and selectors of electronic information to specially and accurately satisfy their needs.

Attaining Proficiency in Arabic and English Languages

Since language barrier has been identified as one of the challenges faced in utilization of electronic resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities, there is the need for both staff and students to be proficient in both Arabic and English languages. Being proficient in English and other major languages will enable one to master the electronic information resources standard lingua-franca. This will eliminate the barrier for utilizing English and other major languages based electronic information resources.

Similarly, being proficient in Arabic language, which is the lingua-franca of Islam, will enable one to utilize the electronic information resources that are produced in Arabic. Hence, it is very important for Muslim scholars and students to be proficient in Arabic, English and other languages so as to enable them utilize electronic information resources that are produced either in English, Arabic or other languages.

Prudent Time Management

Prudent time management is one of the qualities of a good Muslim. Every Muslim, no matter the level of his engagement, is therefore expected to be time conscious. This is so, because in Islam, everything has an appointed time. In order to address the challenge of time wastage in utilizing electronic information resources, Al-Qarnee [19] advises that one should organize the hours of the day, so that he makes years out of minutes and months out of seconds.

When one attains this attitude, he will not only avoid time wastage but will also profit from every moment of his day, by developing his personality, expanding his ability, etc. Muslims should have the ability to understand and control themselves in their information search and utilization.

Positive Change of Lecturers' Attitude Towards Electronic Information Resources

A positive change of lecturers' attitude towards electronic information resources, from hither to, a not so encouraging one, will definitely motivate and encourage students of Islamic Studies to utilize the resources. This is because, lecturers' attitudes towards any instructional materials has a great role to play in determining its use or otherwise by students. As such, lecturers of Islamic Studies are not only required to understand and utilize electronic information resources in their academic work, but are also expected to encourage students to utilize them. Lecturers should therefore give students assignments, tutorials or term papers that will compel them to utilize electronic resources.

Although the skills of the students can be improved by proper training, however, the lecturers' positive attitudes towards electronic information resources will affect their willingness to learn about the resources, the decision to utilize the resources and the actual uses to which the resources are put. Sheriff [7] suggests that it is time now that Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers should change their attitude so that Islamic Studies play its role in the global era as the way that it played in the golden age of Muslim history.

Positive Change of Librarians' Attitude

Most importantly, positive change of Librarians' attitude towards library users will not only help significantly in addressing the challenges faced by users of electronic information resource on Islamic Studies but also other users of such resources. This is pertinent because it is the primary responsibility of the librarians to meet the information needs of users. That is to say, the librarians in charge of organizing, providing or using electronic information resources to provide information to users are not only expected to provide services to users but are also expected to teach them how to use the facilities to find the relevant information themselves.

As electronic information resources are increasingly becoming popular in Nigerian universities, the libraries are not only expected to provide services to users but also become teaching centres for electronic information resource utilization. What is important is to have personnel with knowledge and competency in utilizing electronic information resources to meet users' needs. The Librarians in electronic information dissemination also need to be highly committed in carrying out their primary responsibilities.

CONCLUSION

Electronic resources are increasingly becoming prominent in Nigerian Universities. The academic communities are increasingly becoming aware of the benefits of such resources to their academic and personal development. In order to remain relevant and competitive in the ever-changing world, the academic staff and students of Islamic Studies are expected to utilize the resources extensively. This can only be achieved if adequate and relevant resources in all areas of Islamic Sciences are made available and academic staff and students of Islamic Studies are proficient in their utilization. To provide adequate, relevant and current electronic resources on all areas of Islamic Studies requires the concerted effort of all stakeholders, such as government and non-governmental organizations, Muslim philanthropists, university authorities, librarians, Islamic scholars and students.

Finally, it is glaringly clear that the potentials of electronic resources in the acquisition, preservation and dissemination of Islamic education to Muslims and non-Muslims alike are enormous. For academic staff and students of Islamic Studies to play a leading role in the utilization of electronic resources, they are expected to consistently engage in sensitizing, learning and teaching the use of the resources. This is the safest way of saving the Muslim *Ummah* from being in the state of trying to catch up in the changing academic environment.

Recommendations

In order to enhance the development and utilization of electronic information resources on Islamic Studies in Nigerian Universities, the following recommendations are offered:

- The Universities should engage in creating awareness or sensitization campaign in order to enlighten the academic communities on the enormous potentials of electronic information resources in promoting knowledge in general and Islamic education in particular.

- The Universities should provide more computers in the Libraries in order to minimize congestion as well as facilitate easy access to electronic information resources.
- The Universities should seek for donations from philanthropists, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations in order to subscribe to more electronic information resources.
- Universities should provide alternative source of energy in order to ensure uninterrupted power supply.
- In order to address the problem of bandwidth, the Universities should subscribe to dedicated bandwidth from reliable vendors to avoid interrupted services.
- The Libraries should give Students of Islamic Studies adequate practical orientation so as to enable them to be proficient in electronic information resource utilization.
- The Libraries should block all phonographic and immoral sites in order to prevent spread of anti-social behaviours.
- The Departments of Islamic Studies should ensure that the databases and other electronic information resources subscribed to by the institutions adequately cover all areas of Islamic Studies.
- Departments of Islamic Studies should have departmental libraries that are equipped with electronic information resources that adequately cover all areas of Islamic Studies.
- Departments of Islamic Studies should have functional websites with a view to contributing to knowledge as well as enabling others to have unrestricted access to their publications.
- Academic staff of Islamic Studies should be encouraged and sponsored to attend workshops, seminars, conferences as well as on the job training in order to abreast themselves with new developments in electronic information resource utilization.
- Academic staff of Islamic Studies should encourage students by giving them assignments, tutorials or term papers that will compel them to utilize electronic information resources.
- Islamic Centres, Institutes and Organizations should also develop and sustain websites so as to propagate Islamic education as well as enable others have access to their publications.

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