

*Full Length Research*

# **An evaluation of the Use of E-Resources in Nigeria Academic Libraries: A Case Study of Auchi Polytechnic**

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Accepted 26 August 2021

The study assessed the use of electronic information sources at the Auchi Polytechnic library, Auchi, Nigeria. The convenient sampling technique was adopted for the sample of 500 registered library users representing (100%) of the study's population. 487(97.4%) of the 500 administered questionnaires were used for data collection, presentation and analysis using frequency tables and percentage count. The study's findings revealed that e-journals, e-books, CD-ROM database, audio books, e-magazines, e-newspapers and e-maps were the available e-resources in Auchi Polytechnic library. And the only mode of accessing the e-resource was through Science Direct. The findings further revealed that lack of computer knowledge, irregular power supply and lack of user education, were some of the associated challenges in maximizing the use of e-resources. The study concluded that libraries must wake up to the role of providing universal access to print and electronic resources and also engaging in periodic evaluation of their resources to determine whether the collection is still meeting the stated objectives of the library. And recommended that the management of Auchi Polytechnic library should subscribe to other academic databases that contain high quality research contents like EBSCOHOST and research4life programs viz-a-viz HINARI, AGORA, OARE and ARDI; the library should periodically organize information literacy training for its users and regularly evaluate the quality, adequacy, and use of their electronic information sources and services to meet up with the quality of library services in this technology driven era.

**Key words:** Evaluation; E-resources; Academic Libraries; Polytechnic, Auchi.

**Cite This Article As:** Olamilekan, S.O., Nwadioha, E.A., Emmanuel O.O. ((2021). An evaluation of the Use of E-Resources in Nigeria Academic Libraries: A Case Study of Auchi Polytechnic. *Inter. J. Acad. Lib. Info. Sci.* 9(8): 406-413

## **INTRODUCTION**

Libraries all over the world are now beginning to collect scholarship and material created by researchers and teachers in tertiary institutions in electronic rather than printed forms. That is why in modern times, the content of libraries is not restricted to physical formats such as books, magazines or journals (Abdrahman, 2021). Large resources have been expended on digital library development (Sadiku, Abdulwahab & Mohammed, 2021).

Library is a very important department of every school, college or different educational institutions. Library is a repository of resources. It is a place where the knowledge of the past and the present are stored and can be also used/found to justify the future, if properly utilized (Ola, 2012). It is an integral part of the educational system whose primary function is to serve users (faculty, students, staff and researchers) (Okorie & Agboola 2012).

Resources are viewed as stocks or reserves which can

be drawn on when necessary or an available asset Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (2003). Swapan, (2012) pointed out that a resource is any physical or virtual entity of limited availability which can help to produce goods or services so they can have value. Resources however, can be human, natural, materials and physical.

Library resources according to Oyedun and Nwalo (2011) include materials (books, journals, etc), technological (processes, technology etc), human and financial. They (Oyedun and Nwalo) added that the actual use made of a library's resources depends on the resources made available to users in the library and that if the resources are not adequate for the needs of the users; it is not likely that the library will be heavily used.

Right from the ancient period, libraries have been growing with the times in the formats of collections they held. "From paper and microforms to audiovisual tapes and CDs", the library collection have kept changing (Michelle, 2005). According to Narayana & Goudar, (2005) print medium is increasingly giving way to the electronic form of materials.

Today, electronic resources (e-resources) and services have become the 'in thing'. The e-resources include e-Journals, e-Books, online database, CD-ROM database, subject gateways and audio books, among others. Electronic resources according to Bankole, Ajiboye and Otunla (2015) consists of information resources provided in electronic formats such as internet, CDRom databases, e-books e-journals, Online database, Online Public Access Catalogues, and other computer –based electronic networks. Academic libraries are leading the race in embracing this important aspect of the library systems, this is because of the sophisticated nature of their user communities and the rich research contents which these e-resources possess; the portability and the easy access mode.

As pointed out by Giannis and Christo (2009), scarcely a decade into the digital library environment, librarian already know considerable more about digital library use than they did about traditional library use in the print environment. As a result, the percentage of the library budget earmarked for the acquisition of electronic resourced is on the increase (Dafiaghor, 2012). This, in turn, has called for a critical evaluation of the impact of the e-resources on service delivery in these libraries. The need for evaluation is also due to the fact that there are still lingering questions on whether electronic resources have the 'fix all' qualities ascribed to them by their proponents.

### Statement of the Problem

The importance of e-resources to effective service delivery in academic libraries is no longer an issue for discuss. The value of a library whether it is virtual or

traditional, could be determined by the extent of availability and utilization of its resources. However, with all the eagerness to acquire and make available e-resources, a lot of critical factors are being overlooked. The result is often an e-collection that is irrelevant, obsolete, or frustratingly inaccessible to the users. Even in the case where all the appropriate diligence has been observed and the collection turns out as expected, there is still the need for a periodic evaluation to determine whether the collection is still meeting the stated objectives of the library. Conversely, there seem to be no evidence to support the fact that academic libraries in Nigeria are engaged in such periodic evaluative exercise of their e-resources. Hence, this study assesses the use of e-resources in Auchi Polytechnic Library, Edo state.

### Literature Review

Library information materials today consist of printed material, electronic resources, subscription databases and open-access resources. The 21st century library users expect access to library resources and services remotely. E-resources are used to supplement printed resources as they can be accessed remotely without a physical presence in the library building and are becoming popular with students and academics (Dauda & Lizette, 2020). Ogbekor, 2011 stated that libraries are repositories and access points for print, audio, and visual materials in numerous formats, including maps, prints, documents, microform (microform/microfiche), CDs, cassettes, videotapes, DVDs, videogames, e-books, audio books (microfilm/microfiche), and many other electronic resources. Electronic resources (e- resource) are critical tools for effective scholarship in university education; it also gives great opportunities for distance education (Livina & Mole, 2021). According to Yakubu and Olatoye (2015) electronic resources are the information on devices such as net, hard disc, flash drive and CD ROMS. It could be in form of database application created for a particular organization that manages data and allows easy access, fast storage and retrieval of that data. Issa, Amusan and Daura (2009) identified the e-resources in the library as e-books, e-journals, OPACS, webliographies (equivalent to a printed bibliography), e-letters, e-maps, e-dictionaries, e-encyclopaedias, e-still and moving images, sound recordings, e-indexes, e-conference/seminar proceedings, e-theses/e-dissertations, e-abstracts and reviews, and e-handbooks. Lang (2008) stated thus: Electronic resources are the prime ingredients and they become a common part of the suite of most academic library resources today. Clarke (2004) opined that "Building electronic collections are largely influenced by a set of library policies and users (faculty and students) preferences in the academic environment. He went further to add that these e-resources are added value to

the academic libraries to offer better services to users.

Flatley, Prock and Library (2009) carried out a survey of current practices on e-resources collection development in academic libraries. The survey found that of the 18 libraries that completed the survey, 10 had no particular process for evaluating resources before purchase. Six had an informal process and two had a definite process. The survey further revealed that most of the libraries surveyed do not have a defined procedure in place for selecting and deselecting e-resources. Also, Studies of the use of electronic resources by undergraduate students at the University of Venda, South Africa by Tlakula in 2017 revealed that the level of usage of these resources by undergraduate students is elementary and limited to SABINET and EbscoHost. Undergraduate student's level of awareness of the different electronic resources is low. The study found that users often confused electronic resources to Web-based internet sources and generally revealed that the level of awareness and training in the use of these resources is still generic, as training is mostly in the first year. It can therefore be inferred from the study's findings that library professionals are involved in a haphazard selection process which is an unhealthy practice. However, the study identifies four stages of e-resource collection development process namely: Librarians needs to be proactive, develop an e-collections CD policy, get input from stakeholders and develop specific criteria.

Findings have revealed the availability and use of e-resources in academic libraries and its awareness among students, researchers and faculty. According to Khan (2009), hundreds of thousands of monographic materials, journals, learning resources, databases, etc. are now available in electronic formats, and these materials can be accessed from the remote corner of a country, thereby increasing the use of information and literature and the efficiency of information services delivery. According to Kumar (2016), the use of e-resources enhances communication, career development, teaching and research in addition to providing subject-specific and updated information. In the words of LaMarca et al (1997), the availability and use of electronic information resources change the interactions between patrons and librarians. Users are now more independent than before; they can have access to these electronic formats from their home computers and search databases according to their needs. Librarians and information professionals are working assiduously to enhance the usability and accessibility of the e-resources not only to meet demands and improve their service delivery, but to maintain its continued importance in impacting greatly to the information needs of the user community.

Dhanavandan and Tamizhchelvan (2012) carried out an evaluative study on e-resources of libraries of engineering institutions in Tamil Nadu, India. The study revealed that all the academic libraries under the study have electronic resources which include: e-journals, e-

books, CD-ROM Database, Online Database and Internet. The study further revealed mode of accessing the e-resources. According to the study, academic libraries have OPAC, WEB OPAC, SUBJECT GATEWAYS AND WEBSITES as mode of access.

Egberongbe (2011) examines the use and impact of e-resources at Lagos State University, Nigeria and finds out that majority of lecturers 92 (90.6%) and research scholars 56(80.0%) prefer to use e-journals, second highest of users prefer e-mail and www with 82 (73.2%) and 60(53.6%) among lecturers, whereas 36(52%) and 46(65.6%) among scholars. 32(28.6%) of lecturers and 30 (42.9%) of research scholars made use of e-research report. The study further reveals the heavy usage of popular and well known resources by faculty members and research scholars. The rest of the electronic resources, bibliographic databases, e-newspapers, e-magazines were comparatively less used.

Sharma (2009) studied the use and impact of e-resources among teachers and researchers at Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, India. The findings of the study reveals that majority of the teachers 46 (88.46%) and research scholar 28 (93.33%) preferred to use e-journals. Second highest preference is www and use of e-mail with 30 (57.69%) and 41 (78.84%) among teachers whereas 23 (76.66%) and 18 (60.00%) among research scholars. 50% of research scholars and 30.77% of teachers make the use of e-research reports. The findings further revealed that only the well-known e-resources are preferably used by the researchers and faculty members, the rest of the e-resources i.e. e-bibliography, e-maps, e-thesis, e-books were seldom/rarely less used. It can therefore be deduced from Sharma's findings that the preferences in the use of e-resources may be unconnected with associated challenges with the use of e-resources.

Rehman and Ramzy (2004) investigated the awareness and use of electronic information resources among health academics. The results showed that libraries are extensively used for research needs, preparation of lectures, and for obtaining current knowledge. Lack of time is the main reason given for not using electronic resources (37 percent). Unfamiliarity with computerized searching comes next (22.6 percent).

Dadzie (2005) investigated the use of electronic resources by students and faculty of Asheshi University, Ghana, to determine the level of use, the type of information accessed and the effectiveness of the library's communication tools for information research and problems faced in using electronic resources. Results indicate that 85 percent of respondents used the Internet to access information, and that respondents mainly accessed information in the library by browsing the shelves.

Agboola and Bamigboye (2011) studied the extent of use of library materials, in three Nigerian universities the study revealed that a greater percentage of the users

made use of library very often. Oyewusi and Oyeboade (2009) also studied the use of library resources in a Nigerian University and found out that, out of 393 respondents, 82.9% agreed that they found the library resources accessible for their academic pursuits while 17.1% disagreed. Also Parameshwar and Patils (2009) pointed out that a large portion of user population in the university is aware of the internet, but they do not know all its techniques and applications.

Furthermore, a few users of the academic libraries still have no knowledge about the e-resources, internet and related applications. Nevertheless, Macaulay (2015) in a study, availability and utilization of electronic resources by University students in Niger state, revealed that electronic resources like the internet, e-mail, online databases, electronic databases and electronic journals were highly used by the respondents, while others like CD-ROM databases, electronic journals, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and electronic books were rarely used. In the study carried out by Dafiaghor (2012) about the problems and prospects of electronic resources usage in Nigerian academic libraries. The study revealed that acquisition cost, maintenance cost, erratic power supply, and lack of information retrieval skills for exploiting e-resources, are major problems militating against the use of e-resources in Nigerian academic libraries.

In analyzing the advantages of electronic resources, Dadzie (2007), explained that electronic resources are invaluable research tools that complements the print-based resources in a traditional library setting. According to her, the advantages include:

- Access to more current information.
- Access to information that might be restricted to the user due to geographical location or finances and
- Provision of extensive links to additional resources related contents.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To know the availability of e-resources in Auchu Polytechnic Library.
2. To identify the types of e-resources availability in Auchu Polytechnic Library.

3. To ascertain the role of these e-resources in providing effective and efficient library services to the users community.
4. To know the associated challenges faced by the users while accessing the electronic resources in Auchu polytechnic library.

### Research Questions

1. What are the types of e-resources available that you make use in your library?
2. What are modes of accessing the e-resources in your library?
3. What are the problems encountered in providing access to the e-resources in your library?
4. How have these e-resources impacted on the e-library Services?

### METHODOLOGY

This work adopts a survey research methodology. The populations of the study are all the registered users (undergraduate and faculty members) and the library professionals of the Federal Polytechnic, Auchu library in 2020/2021 academic session. The sample of the study is drawn from the total registered users of the library and they include all active users of the library. The convenience sampling technique was adopted for administering the questionnaire to the library users that were present in the library at the times of data collection. *A convenience sampling technique is one where the units that are selected for inclusion in the sample are the easiest to access* (Lund Research, 2012). A staff in-charge of the ICT Unit of the library was selected to be part of the sample, to collect other relevant data that library users may not have knowledge of. Questionnaire was the major instrument for data collection, complemented by the interview of the library staff. Two research assistants were used and the data collected were descriptively analyzed with the aid of percentage count and tables of frequencies

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

**Table 1.** Administration of Questionnaires

Respondents	Number of questionnaires administered	Number of questionnaires returned	Percentage (%)
Registered Users of Auchu Polytechnic Library.	500	428	97.4

The table above revealed that five hundred (500) questionnaires were administered to the library users and four hundred and twenty-eight (428) were returned which represents ninety-seven point four percent (97.4%) for analysis.

### Research question 1

**Table 2.** What are the types of e-resources available that you make use in the library?

Variables	Response				Total
	Yes	%	No	%	
E-Journals	134	31.3	294	68.7	428 (100%)
e-Books	302	70.6	126	29.2	428 (100%)
Online Databases	---	---	---	---	
CD ROM Database	394	92.1	34	7.9	428 (100%)
Audio Books	218	50.9	210	49.1	428 (100%)
E-Research Report	---	---	---	---	
E-Magazines	341	79.7	87	20.3	428 (100%)
E-Newspapers	198	46.3	230	53.7	428 (100%)
E-Project	---	---	---	---	
E-Bibliographic Database	---	---	---	---	
E-Maps	244	57	184	43	428 (100%)
E-Manuscripts	---	---	---	---	

Table 2 above showed that the majority of students responded to CDROM database usage, which represents three hundred and ninety four (394) which stood for ninety-two point one percentage (92.1%). Second highest of users preferred magazines which represented three hundred and forty-one (341) which stood for seventy-nine point seven percent. Followed by e-book with three hundred and two (302) respondents which represented seventy point six percent (70.6%). Whereas, the rest of the electronic resources (e-maps, audio books, e-newspapers and e-journals) were comparatively less used. However, the respondents did not respond to other e-resources like (on-line database, e-research report, e-theses, e-bibliographic database and e-manuscripts). This indicated that these resources were not available in Auchu Polytechnic Library for the users to make use of as at the time of this study. This result implied that CD-ROM database, e-magazines and e-books were more consulted sources of information by students. However, these findings to some extent tallied with similar studies conducted by Dhanavandan and Tamizhchelvan (2012) and Issa, Amusan and Daura (2009)

### Research question 2

**Table 3.** What is the mode of accessing these e-resources in your library?

Variables	Response			
	Yes	%	No	%
The database links	---	---	---	---
OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)	---	---	---	---
Web OPAC	---	---	---	---
Library Website	---	---	---	---
Science Direct	344	80.4	84	19.6

Table 3 indicated that Science Direct is the only mode of accessing the e-resources in Auchu polytechnic library which represented three hundred and forty-four (344) with the percentage of eighty point four percent (80.4%). While eighty-four (84) respondents representing nineteen point six percent (19.6%) did not respond. However, no respondents respond to the database links, OPAC (On line Public Access Catalogue), Web OPAC, and Library Website. The implication of this is that Auchu polytechnic does not have these resources as at the time of this study. Therefore the only mode of access to the e-resources in Auchu polytechnic library is through Science Direct as indicated in table 3. Hence, this does not speak well of the mode of accessing the e-resources in this era of prevalent Information Communication Technology.

### Research question 3

**Table 4.** What are the problems you usually encounter while using the selected e-resources in your library?

Variables	Response			
	Yes	%	No	%
Lack of computer knowledge	228	53.3	200	46.7
Irregular Power Supply	281	65.7	147	34.3
Lack of user education	197	46.1	231	53.9
Unfriendly interface	229	53.5	199	46.5

The table 4 above indicated the frequent problems the users faced while making use of the library information resources. It was discovered that the highest problem faced is the issue of power supply which respondents responded to "Yes" which took the total of two hundred and eighty one (281) which represents (53.3%) while one hundred and forty-seven (147) respondents responded to "No" which takes thirty-four point three percent (34.3%). Likewise, unfriendly interference take two hundred and twenty-nine (229) "Yes" of the respondents which represented fifty-three point five percent (53.5%) and they also responded to "No" which took one hundred and ninety-nine respondents with the representation of forty-six point five percent (46.5%). Two hundred and twenty-eight (228) respondents responded to lack of computer knowledge as "Yes" which represented fifty-three point percent (53.3) while two hundred respondents (200) said "No" which represents forty-six point seven percent (46.7%). In the case of Lack of user education, the respondents responded to "Yes" with the total number of one hundred and ninety-seven which represents forty-six point one percent (46.1%) while they responded to "No" with the number of two hundred and thirty one which represents fifty-three point nine percent. This means that the users lacked the prerequisite knowledge of the usage of the e-resources available in the library.

### Research question 4

**Table 5.** How would you describe the impact of these e-resources on your information and research needs?

Variables	Response			
	Yes	%	No	%
Highly Helpful	232	54.2	196	45.8
Moderately Helpful	243	56.8	185	43.2
Least Helpful	221	51.6	207	48.4
Not Helpful	91	21.3	337	78.7

The results from table 5 above showed that two hundred and forty-three (243) respondents responded to "Yes" with the percentage of fifty-four point two percent (54.2%) which is the highest, while respondents also responded to "Yes" for highly helpful option with the total number of two hundred and thirty-two (232) which represents fifty-four point two percent (54.2%) on the table. However, one hundred and ninety-six respondents (196) with forty-five point eight percent (45.8%) responded to "No". Also, two hundred and twenty one (221) with percentage of fifty-one point six (51.6) respondents responded to least helpful and ninety-one (91) respondents with twenty-one point three percent (21.3%) responded to "Yes" while three hundred and thirty-seven (337) with the percentage of seventy-eight point seven percent (78.7%).

The findings above revealed that e-resources were

helpful to the respondents because of the fact that they were more useful, time saving, and more moderately helpful to the users.

The librarian in-charge of the electronic section of the library corroborated the respondents' non-response to on-line database, e-research report, e-theses, e-bibliographic database and e-manuscripts in Table 1 as available e-resources in the library and Science Direct as mode of accessing the e-resources in Table 3. According to the librarian, the resources are not available due to financial constraints and that the library management is pooling all available resources together to ensure that these e-resources are available in the shortest possible time.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Academic libraries in Nigeria are key players in enhancing standard of education and promoting research and learning activities. To sustain this status, libraries must wake up to the role of providing universal access to print and electronic resources and engaging in periodic evaluation of their resources to determine whether the collection is still meeting the stated objectives of the library.

The management of Auchu Polytechnic library should subscribe to other academic databases that contain high quality research contents like EBSCOHOST and research4life programs viz-a-viz HINARI, AGORA, OARE and ARDI; the library should make the e-resources accessible on the library's website; the library should also engage in strategic marketing to enhance and encourage the use of e-resources by periodically organizing information literacy training for its users and regularly evaluate the quality, adequacy, and use of their electronic information sources and services to meet up with the quality of library services in this technology driven era. Also adequate power supply should be provided in order to enhance easy accessibility of e-resources.

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