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Digital Library Education: Global Trends and Issues

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Abstract
The paper examines trends and issues in digital education programmes globally, drawing examples of developmental growth of Library Information Science (LIS), schools and digital education courses in North America, Britain, and Southern Asia, the slow growth of LIS schools and digital education in Nigeria and some countries in Africa and India. The literature so far visited dictated problems of inadequacy in digital education globally to dearth of faculty, training facilities, no collaboration among LIS schools in developing countries, encouraging collaborations in developed countries and not many students attracted to the course. Recommended solutions are suggested for attracting students into the programme and what to do to make it competitive like other programmes in the universities.
Keywords: Education, Digital, Library Information Science (LIS), Digital Library Education.

Introduction

Education is an essential resource or commodity that any human being posses, though in different degrees and types. Education is acquired through learning at home, school and the environment. It can be said to be a moment by moment or every day experiences that are acquired, stored in the brain and used//applied as the need arises. Education should be a worthwhile endevour that prepares life for now and for the future.

Education is as old as man on planet earth. It is either formal or informal type of education. The Bible account of God's creative activities that made God to assess everything as very good (Gen. 1: 27). Assessment in education means the same with evaluation. God educated Adam and Eve on what shall be their food and what plants shall constitute food items for other lower creatures under Adam's care. (Gen. 1: 29, 30). The Israelites (Hebrews) built schools to educate their children in places like Samaria (2 Kings 6:1,2), and other 6 locations. The Sumerians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Greek, Chinese, Romans contributed much in the development of education in the distant past. Today, formal education is known in almost all the countries of the world and it is one of the rights of all persons to have it.

The thrust of this paper is "Education for digital Libraries and Global Trends and Issues". Digital libraries are today's information depositories that their collections are in digital form. These are virtual libraries that involve the use of computers and are technologically driven. It is important that the trends and issues in digital education is addressed so as to ginger developments in the area and especially in Africa and the other developing regions of the world

The relevant literature so far reviewed for the purpose of informing and educating the readers of this article, though limited in number but all show that digital education is not yet wide spread and it seems to be an area that many Library Information Science (LIS) students do not show much interest in it. Most of the LIS schools offering the course, either at certificate, undergraduate and graduate levels are in the United States of America (USA), Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and a few in Asia and Africa. The fact still remains, and that is there aren't many LIS schools offering digital education across the globe.

Services of Digital Libraries Compared with Traditional Libraries

The services rendered by traditional library are those of collection, selection, acquisition, organizing, storage, dissemination, conservation, preservation, etc of library collections or materials. Much physical space is required for the traditional library services to offer meaningful services to its customers. Much man-power is needed to run the different units of the traditional library. Its operations are manually based and a few aspects are electronic based.

Digital library services are similar to those of traditional libraries. The difference is that, digital collections are in digital forms. The services are technologically driven. Less space is required for the users to occupy and access it services. Digital library materials can be access from anywhere on the globe provided electricity and network are available. Computers are the means to deliver digital services to its users unlike in the traditional library services where human labour is vital in its operations.

The most important changes digital libraries bring may be in advancing information learning to the learner. (April, 1995,Marchienini & Mourer, p.73). It may have its own promises for the now and future and also its challenges. LIS has always been a field concerned with the education of future librarians and information professionals. With increasing amount of information available in digital format, preparing LIS students to work in digital library environment has become an important agenda within LIS schools nowadays. Digital libraries

require digital librarians as they are required to select, acquire, organize, make accessible, and preserve digital collections, as well as plan, implement and suggest digital services. (Noorhidawati, Abrizah, Hilmi and Azeana, 2009).

History and Development of Digital Library Education

Maceviciute (2010) stated that digital libraries arrived without prior announcement and librarians started working with digital library resources, creating digital services before Library Information Services (LIS) education started reacting to digital services. By the year 2009, only one (1) university in the world was offering a Master program in Digital Library in the Computer Science Department at the National Chiaotung University in Taiwan (Bakeri, 2009).

Computer Science (CS) and LIS faculties seem to have the strongest hold on what is taught for educating digital librarians in institutions where the course features on the curriculum. Digital library education received attention since 1999 in Malaysia, according to Pomerantz, et al (2006). A count of institutions offering digital library education stood at 20, including one university offering Postgraduate degree. Saracevic and Dalbello (2001) wrote that digital library education was receiving more accreditation from the American Library Accreditation (ALA) in the USA. In India, Indonesia, China, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Thailand, digital library education generally experienced a little growth when compared with global increase. (Ma, Clegg and O'Brien, 2006; Bakeri, 2009).

There are efforts globally concerning Digital Education but with less attention in Nigeria and many developing countries in Africa and South America. The survey of Ma, et al (2006 &
Baker, 2009), ended with suggestion of courses to be mounted in Digital Library Education to include:

Digital Library Design
Digital Preservation
Digitization
Digital Technology
Metadata and
Digital Collection Management

The study reports positive efforts in digital library education in Malaysia, USA, Canada, United Kingdom (UK), Australia and New Zealand. Maceviciute (2010), established 3 MSc Digital Library courses at the university of Oslo (Norway), University College, Tallim University and Parma University, Sweden; Swedish school of Library Information Science Maceviciute, p.208 & 209).

A survey of digital library education in more developed world by Saracevic & Dabello (2001), reported that digital library courses were much developed and acceptable in the USA, Canada, Britain (UK) and Australia. Teachers and students of LIS have digital equipment to work with.

Trends of Digital Library Education in Africa

The development of digital library education in Africa is slow. South Africa's funding of LIS schools is low, though appropriating in ICT (Ocholla & Bothma, 200X, p160). LIS schools are decreasing due to small market for the trained professionals; but still, student enrollment seems to increase (Ocholla & Bothma, p165). No mention of digital library education is made. Attention is more on ICT.

Salman and Olanrewaju (nd) in their joint article on library information science practice in Nigeria, traced the development of LIS services from 1842 to present time. They dwelt more on the coming of ICT, automation of library services, evolution of digital data and telecommunication networks. They decried dearth of trained teachers in modern ICT and the need to train more but silent on digital library education.

Hikwa (2010) said in his findings that library education is slower in Zimbabwe than in South Africa, Botswana and Zambia. There must be presence of LIS schools in a place before introduction of digital library education programme, which is more of a modern course. Most African countries are in the era of developing their ICT programmes, hence the less attention in digital library education now.

There is a presence of digital library education in Uganda but inadequate supply of instructors and slow internet services (Okello-Obura & Bukariya, 2011). True education will demand adequate supply of qualified instructors/teachers and avenues for training and retraining them and the adequate supply of students and teaching materials before new progrmmes are approved and mounted for students. There must be a market and future prospects for the products of such a new programme.

Digital Library Education in India and South Asia

Problems and weak links of LIS education in India and South Asia are inadequate or absence of quality research, training and absence of collaborations, constant changes in the libraries, new methods of information handling, problems in accessing information through the use of ICT and provision of quality information. Today, internet, web-based tools, new techniques, information storage and retrieval technologies have aided radical changes in

libraries. (Bakeri,2009).

In India, the quality of education, research and training demand immediate attention. There is the problem of unplanned expansion of schools, lack of professional accreditation by the National Association and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India. The inadequate supply of faculty, thereby not attracting funding for research and development and no effort for research in indigenous knowledge

Important Shifts in models

The known model and practice in the classroom setting has been teaching, but the shift now is from teaching to learning, rote to resource-based learning, and from face to face to e-learning. The library traditional services have shifted to networks, ownership to access, just-in case to just-in time, from monopoly to open source. (Singh and Malhan, 2009). Changes are therefore needed in education to catch up with these shifts.

The present generation of information seekers are very impatient and prefer quicker ways of getting their information through the internet than through books. "Any delay in the process creates anxiety and prompts them to go for the alternative. (Singh and Malhan, 2009).

Revamping of LIS programmes and library services is essential to satisfy the impatient information seekers. Educators, are required to make students critical thinkers and independent learners and not robots, depending on technology for their questions and answers. The preliminary task of LIS teachers/educators is to provide tactful teaching to make students of adequate knowledge who also know how to develop a strategy for continuing their education once after completion. (Halder, 2009).

Challenges and Professional Status

Education and continuing education is what produces experts and professionals. Information centres should have educated persons who are technology-driven who are professionals in their own rights, leveraging knowledge from all possible sources, be able to qualitatively filter information, gather and put ideas from different streams of information, repackage them into value-added products.

LIS and digital education should take care of emerging trends in technology- such as advances in ICT and knowledge management. Knowledge workers and LIS information professionals must equip themselves educationally so as to remain relevant. Information market is gearing rapidly towards digitization, providers therefore, must obtain education and skills in digital tools and services.

Solving Challenges in Digital Library Education

Revamp facilities, revisit curricula to educate and train professionals competent enough to meet and surpass the market demands. Training should focus on skills, talents, knowledge resourcefulness and dissemination of information. The education :(i). should be professional type.(ii). that meets the present challenges and developments and trends in ICT.(iii). that is very useful to the society.(iv). that transforms the professional.(v). to make one to continue to stay in service. (vi). programme that is competitive and relevant to the needs of the work place and market place. (vii). that plays practical role in preparing human resources for managing knowledge resources for the society.(viii). that educate and train students for managing information and knowledge resources in other sectors of economy other than the library.

LIS schools should be prepared to offer course in areas as recommended by Singh and Malhan (nd) like: (a). Digitization Information (b). Digital and Virtual Libraries (c). Social Information (d). Business Informatics (e). Financial Informatics (f). Agricultural informatics (g). Health Informatics (h). Legal Informatics, etc. (i). Knowledge Engineering (j). Information architechtures (k). Information Analysis (l). Hypermedia Specialists. (m). Decision Support Specialists (n). Information Aggregation (o). Institutional Repositories (p). Open Sources (q). Information Products and (r). Services Design.

The curricular must be reviewed to remain relevant and also meet modern day market demands. The functions of LIS schools should include:

i. Providing students with complete knowledge on digitalization
ii. Making students develop skills in digitalization
iii. Enabling students evaluate software and using internet
iv. Enabling students acquire skills to provide library services in digital form as in the traditional libraries.
v. Based curriculum on digitalization
vi. Provision of competent faculty
vii. Instructional technology support
viii. Learning resources (in the form of print, electronic and web-based materials)
ix Continuing education programmes , system of continuous evaluation, adequate financial support from the sponsoring bodies.x. Knowledge and skills to manage the shift in the goals of the library and the view of the changes in information storage and delivery mechanisms. (Halder, 2009,p 47).

Suggestions for the LIS education in India, Nigeria and the rest of the third world are provision of minimum infrastructure and facilities by the controlling authority or proprietor. Accreditation of programmes, goals and objectives of the programmes, faculty and students. Financial, administrative and physical resources should be in place. (Chow, Shaw, Gwynn, Martensen and Howard, (2011) .No over admission for easy quality control. Seek and provide latest knowledge of technology to users. Liaison between LIS educationists and the library professionals for providing training in specialized courses. (Halder, 2009, p98).

Faculty

Specialized faculty for Digital Library Education programme should come from Management, ICT, Psychology /Education, Media studies, LIS and etc. Train, Competent and Committed faculty will deliver the goals. Excellence is measured in terms of faculty, curriculum, learning resources and the students. Each area should be developed, cared for and bring to a level "where their synergy results in high quality education". Give more attention to teachers because they are the critical resources responsible for developing the curriculum, learning resources and the students. There should be no room for weak, lazy teachers and sympathy employment

Enrollment Problems of LIS Schools

One of the problems of LIS schools is that of getting enough students to enroll into the programme willingly or as first choice course. However, review and repackaging of LIS courses is encouraging students to enroll into it as courses of choice and not a place for students who are denied admission into other 'more marketable(?)' courses in a university. The table below is an example of how LIS enrollment continue to appreciate in Babcock University in Nigeria from when the programme began in year 2004. Top row is school year and lower row are enrollment figures.

LIS Enrollment in Years

2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	
70	88	130	157	208	260	210	370	376	

Source: Registry, Babcock University

Implications and Uncertainties

Singh and Malhan (nd) in Sueaneg, (2005, p.172) is summarized in this work and stating that, in the years ahead, LIS schools will be competing like any business co-operations hiring the best possible faculty, setting standards, benchmarks and attracting the best students.

LIS department at Babcock University (BU) began by enrolling left over students into its undergraduate programme. Enrollment began appreciating when the curriculum was enriched and the name changed from LIS to Information Resources Management (IRM). Enrollment into IRM at BU is increasing and without persuading left over candidates from highly competitive undergraduate courses.

Problems of Digital Library Education

There is no known collaborations by LIS schools in Nigeria. Singh and Malhan reported same in India. No wider exposure of faculty and students due to no collaborations. Collaboration is not practiced by LIS schools within their countries and regions in Africa and other developing nations. Issues of collaboration is familiar and practiced in the USA and Europe. Singh and Malhan).

Digital education and any other developmental activity that will make LIS remain in the concurrent list of courses in educational institutions of developing countries in general, must be encouraged. Skills must go with theory in digital education so as to make the holder of certificate in digital education marketable, competent professional. LIS schools should make courses and resources consistent with the needs and expectations of the job market.

Conclusion

Digitization in library services seems to have arrived and put to use before educating its operators and users. Advantages of digitization in library services are much, hence the need to intensify digital library education in more developed and less developed countries of the world. Education is a common denominator and also much sought after in all countries of the world. Educational institutions cannot survive without the library; and if library services have gone digital, digital education must develop faster. Many LIS schools should introduce digital library education in their curricular and especially in Nigeria and other less developed countries of the world. Internal and regional collaborations should be encouraged in the areas of curriculum development, exchange of expertise and experience, assessment, accreditation matters, workshops, seminars and conferences, research and development. (Singh, et al (nd) in (Abdullahi,2006, p17).

Recommendations

The following are some recommendations towards developing digital library education in Nigeria, developing countries and the rest of the world, though not exhaustive:

1. Deliberate plans be made in Nigeria, developing countries and the developed world to train faculty for digital education.
2. Introduce Scholarship for students in digital library education.
3. Make the course/programme attractive to candidates
4. Run accredited, certificate, Diploma/ Associate degrees, Undergraduate and Graduate degrees in Digital Library Education in LIS schools.
5. LIS schools should be encouraged to collaborate with sister schools to strengthen their digital programmes.
6. Provision of adequate infrastructure in LIS schools.
7. Meet all and any other requirements for running digital library education programme.

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