Survey of Monitoring Policy on Access to and Use of the Internet in Selected University Libraries in South-Western, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents the survey of monitoring policy on access to and use of the Internet in selected university libraries in South-western, Nigeria. It shows the relevance of Internet monitoring policy, ways of Internet monitoring policy, items, sites and activities to be monitored in university libraries in Nigeria. Thus, the study suggested the need for monitoring policy on access to and use of Internet in University libraries in Nigeria in order to create an enabling environment for proper use of Internet for academic purposes by students.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Internet is unarguably a good source of getting the right information and solution to problems in an academic environment. This is no doubt a fundamental function of the Internet services to the academic community. Nevertheless, students all over the world surf the Internet for different purposes which needs to be monitored; therefore tailoring their interest more to education use. As Tiemo, Bribena and Nwosu (2011) observed that in some universities in Nigeria, there are no regulations guiding the usage of electronic information resources in the library. As a result, some students explore the Internet in a negative way rather than availing themselves with the vast educational resources online. More so, in order to explore the Web wisely by students, university libraries should provide monitoring policy in order to promote efficient use of Internet for academic purposes. This is why this study tends to investigate monitoring policy on access to and use of the Internet in selected university libraries in South-western, Nigeria.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Reitz (2004) access is the right or the privilege of using a computer system or online resource, usually controlled by the issuance of access codes to authorized users. In a more general sense, access is the ability of the user to reach data stored on a computer or computer system. Internet access is a high level of connectivity that fosters unparalleled degree of communication, collaboration; resource sharing and information access (Oketunji, 2001). Effective access to the Internet improves competent skill in surfing information on the web. Library patrons use the Internet to access, retrieve and disseminate information. While access to Internet resources offers students with rich and vast information to develop professionally, academically, and culturally. Therein, it should not be misused in any form.

Therefore, Internet use is the ability to access the Internet to perform several tasks in order to retrieve specific information needs. In the different study of Woherem (1993), Afemann (1997) and Oketunji (2001) they identified potential areas Internet generally could be used. They include education, agriculture, office automation, security, entertainment, politics, construction, banking, commerce, health etc. In other words, Internet could be used in all spheres of life to improve the lives of people and solve societal problems. Hence, for proper utilization of Internet by students, there should be a lay down monitoring policy to regulate its use.

However, in any organization or academic institutions that has effective Internet connectivity; certain monitoring policy is being outlined to ease efficient, access to and proper use of the Internet. Therefore, monitoring policy (acceptable use policy) has been described by Reitz (2004) as guideline established by a library or library system concerning the manner in which its computer system and equipment may be used by patrons and staff. For example, most public and academic libraries prohibit the use of library computers for private, commercial or unlawful activities. Headers (2012) stated that a monitoring policy is a collection of rules that are associated with each type of monitored asset; it also contains the information needed to monitor a managed asset with user-defined alert configurations, including defined threshold and alert monitors. According to International Encyclopedia of Information and Library Science (1997) monitoring in business and industry, describes the regular overseeing of a process, or activity, which seek to establish the extent to which input, work schedules, other required actions and targeted outputs are proceeding to plan, so that action can be taken to correct any deficiencies detected. It also states that monitoring of network use, is a prequisite for the filtering of the Internet use that is applied by those who-whether in the home, workplace, educational institution, or library-provide internet access and fear the harmful or distracting capacity content available.

The Internet regulation is basically restricting or controlling access to certain aspects of information. The Internet regulation consists of mainly two categories: data censorship and the Internet access control. Most of the Internet regulations are imposed by the government in an effort to protect the best interests of the general public, which is a form of censorship. The other form of the Internet regulation is domain registration, that is, through the internet protocol (IP) address control (123Helpme.com.2009).

Monitoring is the essential foundation of an effective information security programme and also the mechanism an organization posses to inform and enforce behaviour on users and staff on proper use and access to the Internet. Since the policy is difficult to implement, Bergeron and Berube (1990) have proposed guidelines for the formation of computer policy which are directly applicable to information policy.

- All policies must contribute to the success of the organization.

- Management must ensure the adequate sharing of responsibility for proper use of information system.
- End users of information system should be involved in the steps of policy formulation.

However, the Internet is manifestations of information technology as cultural paradigm. Where there is a moral sense, there are obligations and responsibilities. Users of the worldwide web must be self-regulators according to accepted standards and rules (Berners-Lee, 1999; Stoll, 2000; Chapman and Dhillon, 2001). According to Zuckerman (2010) filtering or censorship performance by online service providers (OSPs) for services such as social networking sites, blogs and websites is referred to as a form of intermediary censorship. Another point in the network in which this is done, is at the organizational level, where the offices, schools, libraries and business are also able to filter and monitor Internet use. Academic Internet library policy should provide for the responsible and fair use of the Internet resources through effective monitoring policy. Shuman (2001) stated that a policy document, requiring the signature of all library employees should spell out what is unauthorized use and caution library employees against using Internet for personal purposes or financial gain, such as sending mass mailings, advertising sideline business or pointing unauthorized files from the web.

Eli (2011) outlined the library regulation on computer use as:

a) Accessing child-pornography sites;
b) Hacking, including installing software and/or changing settings on the local PC;
c) Physically damaging computers;
d) Disruption or obstruction of authorized use of the network;
e) Destroying the integrity of computer-based information;
f) Engaging in the public display of offensive sexual material,
g) Engaging in sexual harassment of library staff or other patrons through the use of internet sites;
h) Infringing copyright or licensing agreements;
i) Using library computers with the intention of threatening, intimidating or invading the privacy of others;
j) Using library computers in ways blatantly inconsistent with the primary purpose for which they are intended.

However, to ensure that Internet usage is regulated in the library, it requires a login, using a university-assigned mail address and personal password (Tiemo, Bribena, Nwosu, 2011). Therefore, access to and use of the Internet in university libraries should be highly guided to avoid malicious use, excessive time waste, cyber-sexual abuse on-line gambling, games playing, cyber relationship, on-line criminal act, online information abuse etc.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The advent of Internet bought a lot more complications, than many academic institutions in Nigeria is prepared for. Nevertheless, the speedy development of search engines and the increase use of the Web by all types of institutions propel the demand for Internet-related services which most students explore its advantage abysmally due to inexistence or poor implementation of monitoring policy on Internet access and use; rather

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than availing themselves with the vast educational resources online. This is why the study investigated monitoring policy on access to and use of the Internet in selected university libraries in South-western, Nigeria.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to investigate monitoring policy on access to and use of the Internet in selected university libraries in South-western, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1) ascertain the extent of access to Internet in the university libraries;
2) determine the purpose of use of Internet in the university libraries;
3) find out if there are monitoring policy to regulate access to and use of Internet in the university libraries.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study covers the university libraries of Babcock University, University of Ibadan and Lagos State University. And it specifically focuses on the students of these three universities. The study also investigated monitoring policy on access to and use of Internet in selected university libraries in South-western Nigeria.

6. METHODOLOGY

Survey research method was adopted and questionnaire was used to collect data. A total of three hundred and fifty questionnaires were sampled from the total population of students of University of Ibadan, Lagos State University and Babcock University, out of which two hundred and eighty five copies were completed for analysis using frequency counts and simple percentage to answer the research questions.

7. ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Table-1. Demographic Information of the Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
100 level	37	13.0
200level	41	14.4
300 level	67	23.5
400 level	93	32.6
500 level	1	.4
700 level	39	13.7
800 level	7	2.5
Total	285	100.0
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	166	58.2
Female	119	41.8
Total	285	100.0

Source: Field work by the researchers

Table shows the demographic information of the respondents. The information culled from the questionnaire on demographic information revealed that 37(13.0%) of the respondents were 100 level,

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41(14.4%) were 200 level, 67(23.5%) were 300 levels, 93(32.6%) were 400 levels, 1(.4%) was 500 levels, 39(13.7%) were 700 levels, while 7(2.5%) were 800 levels. Which means that 300 levels, 67(23.5%) and 400 levels, 93(32.6%) students mostly use the library. On Gender distribution, it was revealed that out of 285 respondents that took part in the research, 166(58.2%) of the respondent were males while their females counterparts were 119(41.8%). This shows that there are many more male students that use the e-library than female at the period of the research.

Table-2. The extent of Access to the Internet in University libraries

S\N	Items	Labels	Institution			Total
			Lagos	U.I	BU	
1	Do you have internet access in your university library	No	59(25.4)	58(25.0)	115(49.6)	232(100.0%)
		Yes	29 (54.7)	14 (26.4)	10　(18.9)	53 (100.0%)
2	Complete access (no restriction)	No	70　(37.2)	52(27.7)	66(35.1)	188(100.0%)
		Yes	18(18.6)	20(20.6)	59(60.8)	97(100.0%)
	Completely no access	No	71(28.5)	59(23.7)	119(47.8)	249(100.0%)
3		Yes	17(47.2)	13(36.1)	6(16.7)	36(100.0%)
4	Some restrictions	No	51(31.5)	40(24.7)	71(43.8)	162(100.0%)
		Yes	37(30.1)	32(26.0)	54(43.9)	123(100.0%)
5	Some application sites are blocked	No	75(31.4)	56(23.4)	108(45.2)	239(100.0%)
		Yes	13(28.3)	16(34.8)	17(37.0)	46(100.0%)
6	Accessible sites are available during practical time	No	81(30.8)	70(26.6)	112(42.6)	263(100.0%)
		Yes	7(31.8)	2(9.10)	13(59.1)	22(100.0%)
7	Blocked sites can be accessed if permission is requested/justified by the system administrator	No	73(31.5)	57(24.6)	102(44.0)	232(100.0%)
		Yes	15(28.3)	15(28.3)	23(43.4)	53(100.0%)
8	Other restrictions	No	67(29.4)	55(24.1)	106(46.5)	228(100.0%)
		Yes	21(36.8)	17(29.8)	19(33.3)	57(100.0%)

Source: Field work by the researchers

The analysis on the extent of access to the Internet in the university libraries is presented in Table 2, which reveals the extent of access to the Internet in the various university libraries: Do you have internet access in your university library: Lagos 29(54.7%), U.I. 14(26.4%), Babcock 10(18.9%); Extent of Access you have to the Internet in your library: Complete Access: The respondents in Lagos and U.I have no access but in Babcock 59(60.8%) indicated that they have access. Other questions raised have poor response. Therefore, in order to improve access to the Internet university libraries should endeavour to sensitize students on the availability of Internet facilities.

Table-3. Purpose of Use of the Internet in the University Libraries

S\N	Items	Labels	Institution			Total
			Lagos	U.I	BU	
1	For Assignment	No	55(42.0)	38(29.0)	38 (29.0)	131(100.0%)
		Yes	33(21.4)	34(22.1)	87(56.5)	154(100.0%)
2	For research	No	24(45.3%	9(17.0)	20(37.7)	53(100.0%)
		Yes	64(27.6)	63(27.2)	105(45.3)	232(100.0%)
3	For charts	No	83(32.8)	61(24.1)	109(43.1)	253(100.0%)
		Yes	5(15.6)	11(34.4)	16(50.0)	32(100.0%)
4	For entertainment	No	85(33.3)	62(24.3)	108(42.4)	255(100.0%)
		Yes	3(10.0)	10(33.3)	17(56.7)	30(100.0%)
5	For games	No	86(31.2)	68(24.6)	122(44.2)	276(100.0%)
		Yes	2(22.2)	4(44.4)	3(33.3)	9(100.0%)

Source: Field work by the researchers

The analysis on the purpose of use of the Internet in the university libraries is indicated in Table 3, it reveals that majority of the respondents use the Internet in Babcock 87(56.5%); For assignments and few of them in Lagos 33(21.4%), U.I. 34(22.1%), For research: Lagos 64(27.6%), U.I. 63(27.2%), Babcock 105(45.3%);For chats: Lagos 5(15.6%), U.I. 11(34.4%), Babcock 16(50.0%); For entertainment: Lagos 3(10.0%), U.I. 10(33.3%), Babcock 17(56.7%); and For games: Lagos 2(22.2%), U.I. 4(44.4%), Babcock 3(33.3%);

Table-4. Existence of Internet Monitoring Policy in University Libraries

S\N	Items	Labels	Institution			Total
			Lagos	U.I	BU	
1	Is there any Internet monitoring	No	51(27.3)	41(21.9)	95(50.8)	187(100.0%)
	policy in your university library?	Yes	37(37.8)	31(31.6)	30(30.6)	98(100.0%)

Source: Field work by the researchers

Table 4 reveals the existence of Internet monitoring policy in university libraries. Therefore, majority of the respondents believed that there is no Internet monitoring policy in the university libraries.   The responses are as follows: Lagos 51(27.3); U.I. 41(21.9); Babcock 95(50.8) of the respondents indicated 'No'.

8. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings shows that male undergraduate students formed the majority of the respondents and 300 and 400 level students used the university libraries more. It was revealed that majority of the respondents in the university libraries use the Internet for research and assignment and does not use it for games, chats and entertainment. Yusuf (2006) said that in research the Internet provides wide opportunities for quicker access to relevant and current literature, access to wide range of instruments, online opportunity for validation of instrument, simulation of an on-going research, and on-line statistical analysis. Furthermore, collaboration in research (trans-institutional, trans-national and trans-continental) is possible, and wide range of opportunities exist for the dissemination of research findings (journals, personal web page, foundations/organizations' web pages, etc.) (University Libraries, 2003b). Based on the policies that regulate use of the Internet in the university libraries, it was revealed that the university libraries understudy does not have monitoring policy. Also it was revealed that most of the respondents are ignorant of what monitoring policy is all about. This supports the study of Tiemo ,Bribena and Nwosu (2011) that in some universities in Nigeria, there are no regulations guiding the usage of electronic information resources in the library. As a result, some students explore the Internet in a negative way rather than availing themselves with the vast educational resources online.

9. CONCLUCTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

University libraries are viewed as the most vital part of the university system, that support effective teaching, learning and research. The academic health, intellectual vitality and effectiveness of any university depend largely upon the state of the health and excellence of its library. In actual fact, university libraries are on the leading edge of Internet developments because of the information resources they provide for teaching,

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learning and research. Therefore, monitoring policy on access to and use of the Internet in university libraries should be highly guided to avoid malicious use, excessive time waste, cyber-sexual abuse on-line gambling, games playing, cyber relationship, on-line criminal act, online information abuse etc. Based on the above findings, it is recommended that University libraries should endeavour to adopt a monitoring policy that will regulate students access to and use of Internet for specifically academic purposes.

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