Global system of mobile communication as tool for information technology among lecturers in college of medicine

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ABSTRACT

The library was once known as a place to go in search for information and knowledge, however, the introduction of internet technology has greatly affected this fact. Global System of Mobile (GSM) communication through it internet services is having impacts on Nigerian by enabling human connection and a wide variety of services right in our living rooms and offices. Hence, this study aim at determining the extent lecturers of the College of Medicine of Ambrose Alli University used GSM as a tool for information technology. This is a randomly sampling study involving the use of questionnaire and face to face interview. The results showed that all the lecturers own at least a phone and use it mostly in communication. Although 18/24 of the lecturer have browsing phones, only 7/18, 11/18 and 8/18 use socio networks, google (Research purposes) and Yahoomail respectively. Conclusively, the findings of this study showed that lecturers use phones in several social and educational based services. Base on the findings of this study, the library can be used to pass information to her target (lecturers, researchers and students) via GSM services.

Key words: Global System of Mobile communication, Information technology, Library, Lecturers, Students

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INTRODUCTION

The library is a place entrusted with the acquisition, organization, preservation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in whatever format it might appear (Olanlokun and Salisu, 1993). With the arrival of the 21st century Information Technology (IT), the live of these qualities of the library now puzzle researchers. In fact, the shift to reliance on online resources has alarms many librarians and faculties (Fred and Van, 1998; Bonnie, 1998). As a result, the role of the academic library has begun to wane and several authors like Millson-Martula and Menon (1995) and Kimberly and Gloria (2003) have raised several questions such as: has the library become a dinosaur?

Specifically, IT is any computer-based tool that facilitates the search, retrieval and dissemination of information to seekers, as well as support information processing needs of individuals, groups and organization (Haag, 2002). To Ehikhamenor (1993), IT is the acquisition, processing, storage and dissemination of information by means of computer, office machine and telecommunications. However, according to Akintunde (2004), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a terminology which has overtaken information technology (IT) because of its appropriateness and relevance. According to him, while Information Technology (IT) focuses on the computer, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) emphasizes the use of technology for development, thus focusing on the use of computer and other technologies such as telephones etc, to process, transport, transfer voice/video and other data singularly or mixed with least interference.

No doubt the widespread interest in information and communication technologies (ICTs) is a thing of the 21st century which according to Crede and Mansell (1998), are crucially important for sustainable development. In fact,

the significant changes witnessed in most developed countries for the past two decades are not without connection with ICTs (Thioune, 2003). These multi-dimensional changes have been observed in almost all aspects of life from economics, education, communication, political, as well as health.

Of interest in this study is the mobile technology (cell phone also known as Global Satellite Mobile (GSM) handsets). According to Nix et al. (2007), there has been no technology so widely available to citizens as mobile technology in the history of the use of technology. In support of this fact, it was announced in July 2005 that ownership of mobile devices had reached 2 billion for the first time and was postulated that ownership would reach 3 billion as early as 2010 for a world population of 6.5 billion (Ajagbe et al., 2011). In Nigeria also, the story is similar. Although GSM network was introduced in 2001, according to Pyramid Research's estimates, the number of mobile subscriptions in the country was roughly 73m in 2009, resulting in a mobile penetration rate of 49% of the population (Pyramid Research, 2010). By implication, mobile services are readily in use by a significant proportion of Nigeria's population and will continue to post rapid growth. This demonstrated that there is widespread use of mobile phone technologies as compared to the use of personal computers across all walks of life

Etukudo (2009) emphasized further that in the last seven years in Nigeria, people became more inclined towards technology and mobile telephony as a burning example of the influence of communication technology on ease of human existence. GSM in the present have several packages that are found to be predominantly used by people such as telephone conversation, short messaging services (SMS), voice messaging, multimedia messaging services (MMS), listen to music, videos and install games, and internet access which is of academic importance, and this depend on the capability of each mobile phone technology and services rendered. These applications have been made possible through various developments in the mobile telephone technology such as General Packet Radio Service (GPRS), Wireless Application Protocol (WAP), and the 3G standard. With regards to these services and usage of GSM, Etukudo (2009) conclude that the use of GSM has been discovered to be of more positive influence on human activities than of negative not minding a few problems inherent as a result of service quality associated with various service providers across countries and locations.

In line with the ongoing, this study aimed to investigates how much of the different technologies and services provided by mobile phones are used by lecturers of the College of Medicine of the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma- Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, is the Edo state own University in Nigeria. The College of Medicine of the Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, presently provide services for two faculties know as the faculty of Basic Medical Sciences and faculty of Clinical Sciences. However, the Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences is of research interest and houses the Department of Human Anatomy, Human Physiology, Medical Biochemistry, Medical Laboratory Sciences, and Nursing.

The study adopted a random sampling survey design using questionnaire and face to face interview. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on respondents' departments, number of phones and type, their experience in using mobile phones, average expenditures on loading their phones, number of calls received and made per day, their awareness and use of the various GSM services and awareness and use of IT provided by mobile phones.

RESULTS AND DISCUSION

Lecturers from four departments participated in the study. Table 1 showed that the highest number (44%) of respondents was from the department of Human Physiology while the Department of Nursing presented the least. The 24 lecturers who participated in the study all have at least a phone while 13 reported they have more than one phone. Nokia was the single most type of phone they have and MTN was the most reported network. The finding from this study shows that GSM is an important tool for the lecturers in the college of medicine. In accordance with this finding, Tella et al. (2007) reported that GSM has emerged as in integral essential part of the culture and life of Nigerians as it had played a significant role in communication. In accordance with the above findings, Etukudo (2009) observed in his study of usage and effects of GSM in urban Lagos that there has been a tremendous shift from the conventional two-way verbal communication of telephone to the recent GSM mobile communication which has shown the impact technology has on human existence. Kajumbula (2007) observed in his study that students' access to mobile phone technology to be very high and concluded that mobile phone presents a very attractive option to easing communication between the students and the Department.

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Table 1. Respondents' distribution and GSM type

Items	Variable	Frequency
Department of participants	Human Anatomy	5
	Human Physiology	9
	Medical Laboratory Sciences	7
	Nursing Sciences	3
	Total	24
Numbers of phones	1	11
	2	9
	3	4
	4+	0
Phone make	Nokia	9
	Samsung	5
	Tecno	2
	More than one type	8
Network used	MTN	11
	Glo	3
	Airtel	2
	More than one	8

Table 2: Use of phone as information technology by lecturers of college of medicine

Uses of phone	Varable	Number
Phone types	Browsing	18
	Not browsing	6
Uses of phone	Calculator	13
	Date/calendar	21
	Calls	24 (100%)
	Text messages	18 (%)
	Play game	4 (%)
	Browsing	13 (%)
Type of browsing	Socio networks	7/18
	Research purposes/google	11/18
	Yahoo mail	8/18

Table 2 shows that among the 24 lecturers that participated in the study only 18 have phones that browse the internet. In term of the uses of phone, all lecturers said they use it for calls while 18 reported they also send text messages with their phone. While 21 reported they also use their phone to check time and date, 13 said they had use the calculator in their phone and 4 said they had play game on their phone. Furthermore, only 13 reported to use their phone for browsing the net too. In line with the above findings, Etukudo (2009) emphasized that in the last seven years in Nigeria people became more inclined towards technology and mobile telephony as a burning example of the influence of communication technology on ease of human existence and highlighted a few of the activities that GSM can be used for among which are; you can talk with friends, record events, listen to music, install games, academic applications, videos, transfer academic and non-academic information, visit world wide web. Etukudo (2009) therefore conclude that GSM has been discovered to be of more positive influence on human activities than of negative not minding a few problems inherent as a result of service quality associated with various service providers across countries and locations.

The role of GSM in communication and IT is not unacquainted. It was observed from this study that lecturers of the college of medicine, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, use their phone for communication such as calls (24/24) and text messages (18/24). Indeed, text message known as SMS has been reported as a favourite means of communication (Nonyongo et al., 2005; Mariano and De La, 2004; Pabic, 2003).

In the case of browsing the internet, 7 lecturers reported to have use their phone for socio network, while 8 said they have use it to check their mail and 11 reported to use it for search purposes such as goggling. This finding is support considering the fact by Nix et al (2007) that never in the history of the use of technology in education has there been a technology so widely available to citizens as mobile technology. From Olatokun and Bodunwa (2006) findings the telecommunications revolution has become a very significant aspect of the existence of man in the twenty first century. The GSM however, as discovered from findings of this study has been very useful in the social life of lecturers. Also, this study has revealed that the use GSM has a tremendous positive impact in the academic activities (such as browsing the internet) of lecturers of the collect of Medicine, Ambrose Alli Univwesity, Nigeria.

LIBRARY AND LIBRARIAN IMPLICATION
Considering that the target of institutional libraries such as researchers, lecturers and students, are highly demanding and dynamic in nature, libraries can satisfy their customers through GSM services. In this regard, Fatoki, (2005)

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suggested that academic libraries involved in the dissemination of information should be deeply interested in the various infrastructure networks that serve as major channels for the transmission of information, such as telephones and telephone lines, cellular networks, cable television and the internet. The widespread use of mobile phone technologies as compared to the use of personal computers across all walks of life is known and thus, the library can take advantage of it to meet the need of her customers. In the view of Fatoki, (2005), there is an observation in the ease and possibility for university teachers, researchers and students to locate what they need having not to physically be in the library, through the internet world wide web (www).

The provision of information to target library customer may take various forms as seem elsewhere. Institutions may engage the library in services such as;

1. Delivery such information as examination results, admission status, course registrations to students.
2. Delivery such information as news, meetings and academic calendar to students, faculty members and staff.

In support of the above facts, Universities in the United Kingdom have engaged in the use of mobile technology to provide campus wide information and various other administrative services to staff and students through WAP services (Ajagbe et al., 2011). Also in support to the above fact, this may be a preferred way of communication since according to Kajumbula (2007) students' access to mobile phone technology is very high and therefore the mobile phone presents a very attractive option to easing communication between the students and the Department.

CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the findings of this study have shown that lecturers use their phones in several social and educational based services. Also, the use of GSM as information technology is practise by lecturers of the College of Medicne, Ambrose Alli University, Nigeria. However, the library known for information dissemination is left out. Base on the findings of this study couple with existing fact and practises in other areas, institutional may engage institutional libraries in information delivery since that what the library is known for.

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