Prospects and Challenges of Internet Use among the Postgraduate Students of Social and Management Sciences in Olabisi Onabanjo University, Nigeria

Rifqah Afolake OKUNLAYA
Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

Oyintola Isiaka AMUSA
Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria

Emmanuel Kunle OGUNLANA
Nimbe Adedipe Library, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria
E-mail: ogunlanaek@gmail.com

Abstract
The Internet is the most visible component of the dynamic developments in information and communication technologies. It could be used for information gathering, storage and dissemination in all academic disciplines .This study examined the prospects and challenges of Internet usage by post graduate students of Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye. One thousand two hundred (1200) copies of structured questionnaire were randomly distributed among various respondents and some of one thousand (1000) was retrieved and analyzed.The study found out that students use the internet mostly for chatting, mailing and entertainment. Only a few of them navigate the Internet for research purposes. In conclusion, this study recommended that there should be a compulsory formal training and workshop programs organized at departmental levels for students on the importance of Internet to their various academic activities.
Keywords: Internet Usage; Postgraduate Students; Nigeria; Olabisi Onabanjo University

Introduction

Over the past century the desire to provide information in fast and reliable manners has brought about remarkable development in information technology. This has created a global environment that has drawn the people of the world closer. During the industrial revolution, man has learned to put motors to work and magnify human and animal muscle power. In the information age, man is learning to magnify brain power by putting the power of computation and information services on a global basis. Computer resources have been made infinite and networked together in such a way that it has allowed the generation, exchange, and manipulation of information in an uncountable number of ways. A good example of this is the Internet.

The Internet is an integrating force which has melted technology of communication and computing to provide instant connectivity and global unity. Many people think that the Internet is a recent innovation, when in fact the essence of it has been around for over a quarter century (Wikipedia, 2008). The Internet began as ARPAnet, that is, "Advance Research Project Agency'' a US Department of defence project invented to create network that would continue to function even if a large portion of it was destroyed in a nuclear war or natural disaster. Two decades after, the network that evolved was used primarily by academic institutions, scientists and the government for research and communication. The appeal of the Internet to these bodies was obvious as it allowed disparate institution to connect to each other's computing systems and databases as well as share data via e-mail.

The nature of the Internet changed abruptly in 1992 when the U.S government began pulling out of the network management and commercial entities offered Internet access to the general public. This development marked the beginning of the Internet's astonishing expansion. Today, it has become a widely successful, rapidly growing and global digital library built on a remarkably flexible communication technology (Comer, 2006). Today, not only has most people heard about the Internet, they cannot imagine a world without it. People can now work from home, monitor and transact business, send and receive mail electronically, chat with friends and relatives, receive lectures on-line, download textbooks, get direction of places, using web-cam to view imaginary places etc. Information that took days, weeks or perhaps months to deliver can now be done in a matter of seconds.

Statement of the Problem

The provision and utilization of information of all kinds is vital in our rapidly changing world. Oduwole, Oyewunmi and Oyesiku (2002) assert that human activities on earth have much to do with information and

communication of all kinds and tertiary institutions have been deeply affected by this. It has been observed that with the development of multi-media channel like Internet, information access and exchange have been made easy. The Internet offers a diverse information service that is of benefit to societal growth and development. It assists our tertiary institution in terms of researches, learning, sales of admission form, registration, and keeping of statistical records, school web development, and publication of articles, advertisement, to mention but few. Despite these benefits of the internet, it has been observed not every student of tertiary institutions in Nigeria know how to access and use the Internet; it has also been observed that the few that know how to use it still encounter one difficulty or the other in the use of its various application and resources. This study therefore intends to investigate the prospects and challenges of the Internet usage among post graduate students of Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study
The specific objectives of this study are to:
1. Determine the extent to which Internet facility is useful to students in the Nigeria tertiary institution;
2. Find out reasons for using the Internet from the students;
3. Find out the challenges students encounter in the course of using the Internet;
4. Know the level of awareness of internet infrastructural facilities within the campus and;
5. To know if the students have access to internet facilities.

Literature Review
Information is a published knowledge from a source to meet human needs for decision making (Folorunsho, 2004). Information has the ability to provide encouragement for the socio-cultural, spiritual, political, economic, scientific and technological advancement of a nation (Olarenwaju, 2006). It is the prime commodity of this present age, it is no longer surprising that the world has moved from the industrial age to information age. This is because information today is so important that the survival of man in the society depends on the information availability, accessibility and utilization for problem solving, planning, decision making and control (Popoola, 2005). With the advancement of science and technology information communication technology (ICT) has evolved. These evolvements have brought about new trends and dimension that facilitate information availability, accessibility and utilization in a way that everyone uses it at an unimaginable rate and level.

ICT has brought forth the Internet which has revolutionized the way people interact, communicate, seek information and generally do business with one another (Hassan and Adepoju, 2007). For children, the Internet offers pen-friends known as key-pals. It has impacted every sector, from manufacturing services to education. Internet plays a crucial function in the teaching, learning and research in tertiary institution (Kumar and Kaur, 2006). It is a mechanism for information dissemination and a medium for collaboration interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic limitation of space (Leiner et al, 2002). The explosive growth of mobile computing and wireless network has helped educational institutions stay at the forefront of this changing world.

Ogbenevwogaga and Ogbenevwogaga (2006) assert that the Internet has been of great help to higher education institutions both in the developed and developing nations. Ajala (2000) in his study of Internet awareness, accessibility and use identifies slow server speed and viruses as the problems of using the Internet. The Internet has allowed greater flexibility in working hours and location especially with the spread to web applications. It can now be accessed virtually anywhere by numerous means. Mobile phones, data cards, handheld cellular allow routers to connect to the Internet.

The phenomenal growth of the Internet is one indicator of the impact that this technology will alternately have. There are now thousands of Internet 'home pages' which serve as information sources for institutions and organizations. Information is probably the biggest advantage Internet is offering. You can almost find any type of data on almost any kind of subject that you are looking for. There is a huge amount of information available on the Internet for just about every subject known to man ranging from government law and services, trade fairs and conferences, market information, new ideas and technical support; the list is endless.

Most Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education throughout the world have established their presence on the Internet thereby making it possible for researchers to access past and current research publications. Prospective students can also access information on courses being offered by institutions as well as their admission requirement. The Internet has made entirely new forms of social interaction and other activities possible. This is due to its widespread usability and availability. Internet sites that exist allow wider announcement of groups which may exist mainly for meeting and other purposes. In marketing, Internet has become greatly helpful. For instance, many large companies of today have grown by talking advantage of the efficient nature of low-lost advertising and commerce through the Internet. The Internet has also greatly facilitated personalized marketing which allows a company to market a product to a specific person or a specific group of people. The Internets allow people to chat and send E-mail to family and friends who are far away.

Email offers a cheap and easy alternative to traditional methods of correspondence. It is faster and cheaper than using the telephone. Through the e-mail and the web, one can meet new friends. Cyber- friendship have often developed into real life ones too. Many people have found love partners on the net and have married too.

In democratic societies, the Internet has achieved new relevance of political tool. For instance, the presidential campaign of Howards Dean in 2004 in the United State became famous for its ability to generate donations via the Internet. Many political groups even use the Internet to achieve a whole new method of mobilizing, in order to carry out Internet activism. The Internet has been a major source of leisure with entertaining social experiment. Today many Internet forums have sections devoted to games and funny videos. One main leisure one can derive from the Internet is given room for multi-playing, that is, the world can play at the same time. The Internet is used by many to access and download music, movies and other works for their enjoyment and relaxation. Many use the World Wide Web to access news, weather and sports reports, to plan and book holidays and to find out more about their random ideas and casual Interaction (Krol, 1994).

The foremost target of Internet has always been the communication; and Internet has excelled beyond expectations. Now, we can communicate in a fraction of seconds with a person who is sitting in the other part of the world. Today, for better communication, we can avail the facilities of e-mail; we can chat for hours with our loved ones. There are plenty messenger services in the offering. With the help of such services, it has become very easy to establish a kind of global friendship where you can share your thought and can explore other cultures of different ethnic groups (Goodson, 2007).

Entertainment is another popular reason why many people prefer to surf the Internet. In fact, media of Internet has become quite successful in trapping multifaceted entertainment. Factors like downloading games, visiting chat room or just surfing the web are some uses of Internet people have discovered. There are numerous games that may be downloaded from the Internet for free. The industry of online gaming has tasted dramatic and phenomenal attention by game lovers. Chat rooms are popular because users can now meet new and interesting people. In fact, the Internet has been successfully used by people to find life-long partners. When people surf the web, there are numerous things that can be found; music, hobbies, news and more can be found and shared on the Internet (Robert and Vintan 2003).

Many services are now provided on the Internet such as online banking, job seeking, purchasing tickets for your favorite movies, and guidance services on array of topics engulfing every aspect of life and hotel reservations. Often, some of these services are not available off-line and costs one more. This is the concept used for any type of commercial maneuvering or business deals that involve a transfer of information across the globe via internet. It has become a phenomenon associated with any kind of shopping. E-commerce with its giant tentacles, engulfing every single product and services could be made available at your doorsteps. It has got a real amazing and wide range of products. From household need, technology and entertainment. Despite all these prospects, the Internet according to Comer, (2006) still has the challenges of theft of personal information, spamming, virus threat, pornography etc.
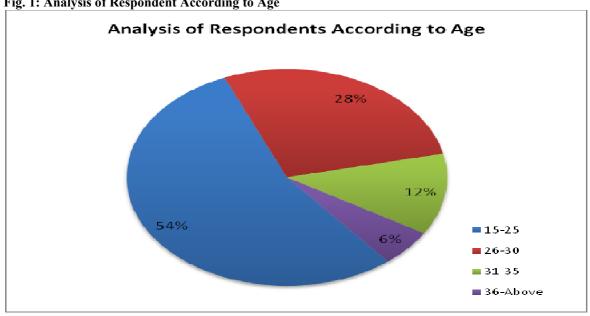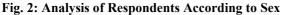
Methodology

Survey design was adopted for this study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire has 3 sections. The first section was designed to collect personal information of the respondents. The second section was designed to collect general information on Internet usage while the third section was designed along the Likert scale which provides four responses of strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
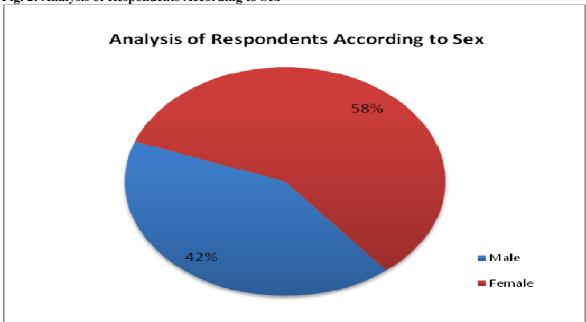
The population for this study was the Postgraduate students of the Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria who are about five thousand (5000). A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. Random sampling method was also used to select 25% of the total population for sampling in this study. This amounts to one thousand two hundred and two respondents. A total of one thousand two hundred copies of questionnaires were randomly administered but only one thousand copies were retrieved and analyzed. Simple percentage was used to analyze the magnitude of responses.
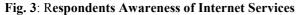
Fig. 1: Analysis of Respondent According to Age

Analysis of Respondents According to Age

15-25: 54%
26-30: 28%
31 35: 12%
36-Above: 6%

Fig. 2: Analysis of Respondents According to Sex

Analysis of Respondents According to Sex

Male: 42%
Female: 58%

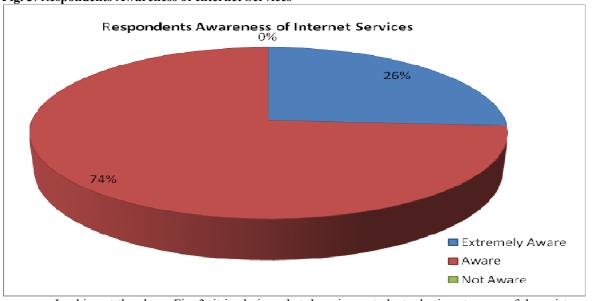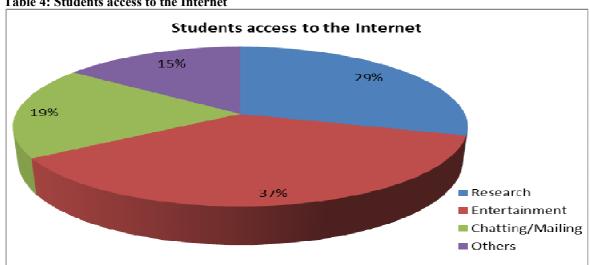**Fig. 3**: R**espondents Awareness of Internet Services**

Looking at the above Fig. 3, it is obvious that there is no student who is not aware of the existence of the Internet. There is no doubt that the Internet is popularly among the respondents in that faculty.
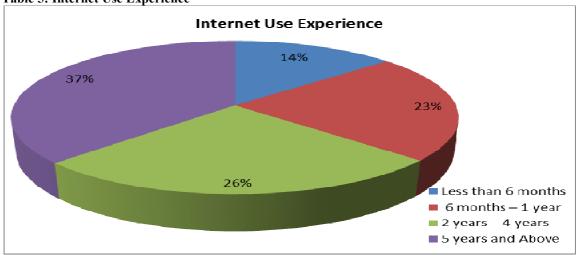
Table 4: Students access to the Internet

The Fig. 4 above shows that 37% of the respondents access the Internet for research purpose, 29% for entertainment, 19% for chatting and mailing and 15% for other purposes. This implies that most students access the Internet for entertainment and amusement and not for research and academic purpose. However, it is not impossible that users can navigate the internet for more than one purpose but analyses were made based on the respondent's intention for going to internet at any point in time. For instance, a user might intend to use internet for research and later find himself or herself chatting with a friend.
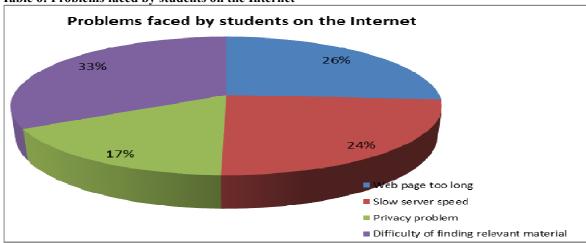
Table 5: Internet Use Experience

The Fig. 5 above shows how long and when the students started using the Internet. It was established that 371 (37%) show that they have been using the Internet for the past five years, 264 (26%) have been using it for the past two years. This affirms that most of the respondents have been using the Internet for a long time. 228 (23%) have been using the Net between a year and six months, while 137 (14%) only have just known it in less than six months. This shows that the responds are familiar with the use of Internet.

Table 6: Problems faced by students on the Internet

Analyzing the above Fig. 6, it is obvious that most students 298 (27%) find it difficult to find relevant materials that will satisfy their information need on the web, 237 (21%) are having difficulty in sourcing for information because of too long web pages. 221 (20%) have problems of slow server speed while 154 (20%) have privacy problem, . This indicates that the Internet as information source is not all satisfying because it poses one problem or the other for its users. 20 (10%) even have problem with virus infection. It should equally be known that external problem like power supply and facility not readily available when needed, is also a big problem to frequent internet usage.

Summary of Findings

This study investigates the prospects and challenge of internet usage by post graduate students of Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University Ago-Iwoye. Majority of the respondents are between ages of twenty-five (25) and thirty (30) while the gender distribution shows that there are more females in the faculty of social and management science of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye. Seventy -five percent (75%) of the total respondents are very much aware of the Internet while almost all of them agree to have access to the use of it. It should however be noted that majority of the students use the Internet for chatting, mailing and entertainment mostly and only thirty percent (30%) of the total respondents use it for research purposes. This finding negates the finding of Jagboro (2003) who in his study of Internet usage in Nigeria universities discovered that students make good use of internet for research purposes.

Many of the respondents have been using the internet for a long time **forty percent (63%)** of them

claims to have been using it for more than two (2) years. The problem mostly faced by the respondents on the Internet is the issue of too long web-page, slow server speed and difficulty in finding relevant web materials. This corroborates the study of Ajala (2007) who in his study of internet awareness found out that slow server speed and viruses constitutes a big problem to internet use.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the above findings, a number of conclusions could be drawn. It is clear that most students are very much aware of the existence of the Internet. It is also noticeable that a large percentage of them make use of this from time to time. It was however observed that despite the high level of awareness and use of the Internet, there are still some certain students who do not make use of the Internet. It is also discovered that those that use the Internet have one problem or the other, which hinder them from maximizing the various benefits being offered while using the Internet. Most common of these problems are slow Internet server speed, too long pages, difficulty in finding relevant information, Internet privacy problem.

Sequel to the above, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Cyber cafes should be opened at departmental level and the students should be motivated to make use of it through assignments given to them by their lecturers.
2. V-Sat with high bandwidth should be installed at strategic areas to tackle the problem of slow Internet access speed.
3. Strong anti-virus devices should be installed for protection against viruses.
4. There should be a compulsory formal training and workshop programs organized at departmental levels for students on the importance of Internet on their various academic activities.
5. Government should improve on the present state of power supply because Internet facilities cannot be enjoyed without it. To complement these, the university management should secure an alternative power source that could mitigate the epileptic power supply problem.

References

Adeya, C and Oyeyinka, B. O.(2002) The Internet in African Universities: Case Study from Kenya and Nigeria. [Online] Available: http://www.ntechunu.edu.

Ajala, S. (2002)The New Information Retrieval Media and Challenge for Nigerian Libraries *African Journal of Library Archival and Information Science* 10 (1) pp. 75-78.

Capron, H. L and Johnson, J. A. (2004) Computers: Tools for Information Age 8th Edition. New Jersey; Pearson P 226.

Comer, D. (2006)The Internet Book: Everything You Need To Know About Computer Networking and How The Internet Works 4t Edition; Upper Saddle River, 2007. pg 343.

Folorunsho, O. (2004) HIV/AIDS Information Needs and Sources: A study of Secondary School Students in Osun State' *Gateway Library Journal* 7 (2). pg 4.

Goodson, C. Web Connection Generation. *The Futurist,* 35 (5) 9. 2001.

Hassan, J. K and Adepoju, S. A. (2007) An Evaluation of Internet Connectivity of Information Technology Firms in Minna Metropolis". *The Information Technologist: An International Journal of Information and Communication Technology* Vol. 4 No 1 June 2007 pg 96.

Krol, E. The whole internet user's guide and cataloguing. (1994) 2nd edition: O'Kelly and Associates; 1994. Pg 39.

Kumar, R and Kaur, A. "Internet and Use in the Engineering Colleges of Punjab, India: A Case Study Webology, 2 (4). 2005 Article 2 [Online] Available: http://www.webology.ir/2005/v2n4/a21.Html. Retrieved February 7, 2007.

Leiner, B.M., Cerf, V.G., Clark, D.D., Kahn, R.E., Kleinrock, L., Lynch, D.C., Postel, J. and Roberts L.G.(2002) "A Brief History of the Internet" [Online] Available: http.//www.Isoc.org/ Internet/History/Briefs.html.

Oduwole et al. Accessibility and retrieval of Electronic Information at the University of Agriculture Library'. *Library Review* Vol 52 (5) pp 228-233. 2002.

Olarenwaju, I.(2006) Reaching the Goals of World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Through Effective Library and Information Service Provision in Nigeria. *Journal of library and Information Science* (JOLIS). Vol.3 No.1 & 2. Pg. 86.

Ogbenevwogaga, B. A. and Ogbenevwogaga, D. T. (2006) "The impact of the Internet on Research: The experience of Delta State University, Nigeria" *Library Philosophy and Practice* Vol 8 No 2.

Popoola, S. O. "Library and Information Science Profession; the New Direction in 21st Century in Nigeria" Paper Presented at the AGM of NLA Osun-State Chapter 30th Dec. 2005.

Robert, E. K and Vintan, G.C. (2008) What is Internet and What Makes It Work?" Wikipedia foundation.

Walthowe, A. (2007) An Anecdotal History of the People and Communities that Brought About the Internet and the Web Online.   .

The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open-Access hosting service and academic event management. The aim of the firm is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the firm can be found on the homepage:
http://www.iiste.org

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

There are more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals hosted under the hosting platform.

Prospective authors of journals can find the submission instruction on the following page: http://www.iiste.org/journals/   All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Paper version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: http://www.iiste.org/book/

Academic conference: http://www.iiste.org/conference/upcoming-conferences-call-for-paper/

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digtial Library , NewJour, Google Scholar