



Misconception of Smartphones as a Threat to Library Services

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Abstract – *The paper is on misconception of the Smartphone as a threat to library services. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The main reason for this paper is the argument that Internet is now replacing library services in our society. Internet cannot replace library of any type, because, quality information and professional librarians are not cheap; they must be paid for to be accessed and made available to users. To become professional librarians takes years and much money to achieve. Also, to produce quality information (materials) which are in the libraries it involves budgeting. The study was conducted in Federal, State and Private University Libraries in Delta, Anambra and Taraba states in Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised one hundred and five(105) library users drawn from three universities. Questionnaires and Interviews were used for data collection. Information is easy to access with the Smartphone, but the negative effects and uses of Smartphone were discussed. Findings show that tertiary institutions library resources users at NOUN, Asaba Centre, do not consult their library always, MUO users frequently do, while TSU users also consult their library for information resources.*

Key words: *Smartphone, Library, Services, Information, and Education*



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1. Introduction

The greatest thing which ever happened to library and information science profession is the application of Information and communication technologies (ICTs) to operations and services of the library in the era of screen-based knowledge or education. There are different schools of thought in support of ICT application in library system since inception of it to the world. But some are against it they arguing that there is great decline in the use of library among students except during examination period, because of all these ICT gadgets.

According to a survey conducted by Nwabueze & Urhiewhu (2015) “The argument of application of ICTs in library services only common in some developing countries because of the inadequate public funds, high cost of hardware and software, skills and technical knowhow”. Presently, ICTs development is at fast rate and it is being envisaged that one day the whole operations and services in library will be screen –based. Smartphones are meant for easy-use and convenience in anything we do for life. To use smartphones and enjoy the technology

anywhere, all we need is to bring our smartphones with us. With the mobile data, librarians, information manager, students or users of library can access the Internet easily. This hand-held gadget provides convenience and entertainment with easy control and fast access to information resources anywhere, anytime and with little cost. But Smartphones cannot replace library.

Basically, quality materials in the Internet are not free; to access them researchers must pay for subscription. The researchers also argued that library resources must follow some management policies for acquisition, and proper organization system before they make them available to the public. Furthermore, the main reason for this paper is because of argument that Internet is now replacing library services in our society.

Internet cannot replace library of any types, because, quality information and professional librarians are not cheap, information must be paid for either directly or indirectly before it could be accessed and made available to any user. In the aspects of human resources in the library, to become professional librarians, it takes years and much money to achieve, and they are called information provider/managers, librarians, and digital librarians and so on, in the library. There is no profession that can do without information, therefore, librarians are indispensable in the society. Moreover, to produce quality information (materials) which are in the libraries, budgeting is involved. Therefore, the Smartphone cannot be a threat to library services. Thus, misconception of Smartphone as a threat to library services will never be realistic in the 21st century. Therefore, this study is meant to correct the misconception about the smartphone as a threat to information service delivery in the library system.

1.1. Purpose of the study

1. To find out the meaning and purpose of using Smartphone
2. To determine the effect of Smartphone on library services.
3. To find out the types of library services provided by smartphones.
4. To know the kind of information clientele use Smartphones to download

2. Literature Review

It is evident from literature that in this digital era that any students or user of library at the higher level who intends to make better achievement and go further in academics should have the ability to explore the digital environment (Nwabueze and Urhiewhu, 2015). Smartphone is one of the gadgets they need to explore more for quick information because of easy-use and convenience everywhere, anytime, and with little cost. According to Labossiere (2013) smartphone is an advanced communication gadget with advanced phone capabilities i.e. it has magnificent computing abilities. In addition, the technology used in their designs is unique in that it affects individual engagements, firm productivity and interactions in working places. Smartphones are unique set of communication devices that have revolutionized the social world. It is apparent that most individual in the modern society own or aspire to own a smart phone. A smartphone is a good indicator of a social user class. Furthermore, Labossiere

submitted that superior smart phone makes one smart in the social sphere. That is, individuals who are in the social world tend to associate with those considered to rule the social media via their sophisticated phones. This brings in the issue of morality and the ethical aspect of smartphones in communications.

Information is easy to access with the smartphone and its constant connectivity to the Internet – it only takes a few taps and a couple of milliseconds to discover boundless data on countless topics, making learning easier and assisting curious impulses (Tam, 2011). The variety of apps available for the smart phone makes it a powerful tool of both utility and enjoyment that is applicable to every situation. With a Smartphone, it's possible to plot a route, fling some virtual birds at virtual (and inexplicably green) pigs, and read up on world issues, all within the span of a few minutes.

2.1. Negative effects of the smartphone

Despite the great advantages of the smart phone, there are some negative effects of it to life issues. Smartphone, used without caution and self-awareness, can be the center of a circle of self-damage, wastefulness, and depersonalization for its owner, just as easily as it can be a gateway to easier living and enlightenment.

The effect of overuse of smartphone is that users of library/students might spend less time on work or homework. Those times are misspent on gaming and chatting with friends with the smart phone, or using the smart phone for less important things compared to homework. Their focus will be switched onto the smartphone whenever messages get in or notifications pop out. Even though they were working before the message; there is a high chance that they will continue to use the smart phone after replying the message instead of continuing their interrupted work (<https://billbill1311.wordpress.com/2013/03/11/cause-and-effects-of-the-overuse-of-smartphone-on-students/>).

Also users of library/students spend less time on sleeping due to the distractions from the smart phone. They might need to complete work overnight which they should be able to finish with the time spent on the smart phone previously. The stacking of workload reduces their sleeping time. Also, the entertainment functions of the smart phone might make users of library/students fail to sleep early. Also, chatting with friends with the convenient texting functions makes their sleeptime even late. Without a doubt, the smartphone has great power – we just need to learn the great responsibility that should go with it.

According to Furness (2015) the smart phones have unique and special applications that are distinct from other types of phones. However, the unique applications have jeopardized social engagement by limiting the individuals to be engaged in the chat rooms. This is because the applications are only meant for smartphones and only those who use smartphones are better positioned to interact with other smart phone users from all over the world. Furthermore, Furness said that the society is heading towards a smart phone world, it is apparent that individuals will be investing more time on their screens tweeting and engaging in Facebook forums and other social networks than meeting one on one with friends and colleagues. That is so because increased number of smart phones will share similar mobile applications hence the ability to interact freely with social mates.

The Smartphone has been a source of satisfaction to all social platform i.e. twitter, Facebook communication requirements. However, the negative effects of these social networks come with serious repercussions to the user. Smartphones are addictive phones. Individuals that have subscribed to social networks are unable to do away with them despite the intensity of their assignments i.e. at the work place or even homework from school(Coffman,2013).

Users will find themselves distracted from their concentration to answer a chat message or an email from a social media 'friend'. In addition, there is a possibility that individuals who miss the distraction during their daily undertakings will be deprived of their sleep, as they will be looking to answer an inbox question and catch up with a friend. The negative effects of smart phones cannot be brushed off in both work places and classrooms. Smartphones have deprived individuals of their ability to produce and make firms stay ahead of their competitors. Besides being unable to attend and concentrate in strategic meetings, employees have been unable to meet their datelines due to much engagement in the social networks through smart phones. On the other students are unable to concentrate in class and grasp the knowledge necessary to revolutionize technology sector further in the near future (Coffman, 2013).

2.2. Use of smart phone

According to Rambitan(2015) who cited Sarwar and Soomro (2013) smartphones have been existing since 6 years ago when one of the largest communication and technology company, Apple introduced the smart phone to the free market, yet in fact, smart phones have already been produced in the market since 1993. The difference between the current smartphone and the previous one is that the earlier version was more prominently used as equipment in a company, and the price was considered too expensive for the public users. Because of slow technological developments in the past, and the unaffordable price, the users of mobile phone were limited to some people and certain groups only.

Based on the study conducted by Barakati (2011), the smartphone was used not only as a communication tool, or just to keep up with technology, but it could be used to learn and improve students' skills in English language learning if it were used properly. However Rusman (2011) added that the advantage of the Internet in learning is the possibility of education circulation to all parts of the country and the unlimited capacity since it does not require a classroom; the teacher can select topics or instructional materials in accordance with the wishes and needs; being accurate and up to date learning materials; and learning can be done interactively, so it attracts students and allow interested parties (parents or teachers) to contribute to the success of the learning process by checking tasks performed by students in online(Rambitan, 2015).

3. Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in Federal, State and Private University Libraries in Delta, Anambra and Taraba states in Nigeria. The sample for the study comprised one hundred and five (105) library users randomly drawn from three universities. The sample size for each university library were; National Open

University Nigeria(NOUN)) Asaba Study Centre Library-thirty-five(35) students; Madonna University Library Nigeria, Okija Campus(MUO)thirty-five(35) students; and Taraba State University, Library, Janigo(TSUJ) thirty-five(35) students;. The instruments used for the collection of data were questionnaire and oral interview with librarians; the data are presented and analyzed with simple percentage.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of the study are presented under the following sub-sections in the same manner the purposes of the study were phrased.

Table 1: Consultation of library

| Do you like consulting the library resources physically? | NOUN, Asaba | MUO, Okija | TSU, Janlingo |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Yes | 15(42.8%) | 32(91.4%) | 30(85.7%) |
| No | 20(57.3%) | 3(8.57%) | 5(14.3%) |
| Total | 35 | 35 | 35 |

The table shows results of three tertiary institutions library resources user in Nigeria NOUN Asaba Centre students do not consulting their library always, MUO students frequently do, while TSU students also consult their library for information resources. This shows that there is decline of library uses at NOUN.

Table 2: Reasons of using Smartphone

| Reasons of using Smartphone | NOUN, Asaba | MUO, Okija | TSU, Janlingo |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| To Update my knowledge about things | 2(5.71%) | 7(20%) | 9(25.71%) |
| Social life(chatting with friends, entertainment, watching movies etc) | 5(14.3%) | 3(8.57%) | 5(14.3%) |
| Educational purpose (downloading Academic materials) | 23(65.71) | 20(57.14%) | 28(80%) |
| Health issues | - | 5(14.3%) | - |
| Business(doing business online) | 5(14.3%) | - | - |
| Total | 35 | 35 | 35 |

The table shows that Smartphone are used mostly for education activities among students, though they use them for social networking among other things.

Table 3: Types of services the Smartphone can rendered to library users

| Services of Smartphone to users | NOUN, Asaba | MUO, Okija | TSU, Janlingo |
|---|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Registration of user | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Alert services about new arrival | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Current awareness services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Scanning services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Mini Internet services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Downloading/retrieval services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| E-mail services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Social media services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| GPS services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Wi-Fi/ Hotspot(wireless) services | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Mini storage services (with the File management app.) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Presentation services with projector | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |
| Reading mini reference materials and other documents like Dictionary, Bible etc | 35(100%) | 35(100%) | 35(100%) |

The above table shows that Smartphone could be used for library and information services. Library is a system, while smartphone is an application tool to make information resources of library available to users.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Today, there is a more complete, intricate, and accessible web of information in the world than had ever existed before – an “Age of Information,” as it has been called. Technology is developing at an astonishing rate, facilitating new kinds of utility and entertainment that were unimaginable ten years ago. The process of human communication has evolved into a multi-

faceted one in our time, with texting, instant messaging, and video calling, joining face-to-face relations among what are now the normal methods of our interaction. Information is easy to access with the smartphone and its constant connectivity to the Internet – it only takes a few taps and a couple of milliseconds to discover boundless data on countless topics, making learning easier and assisting curious impulses. The variety of apps available for the Smartphone makes it a powerful tool for both utility and enjoyment that is applicable to every situation. With a Smartphone, it's possible to plot a route, fling some virtual birds at virtual (and inexplicably green) pigs, and read up on world issues, all within the span of a few minutes. The Smartphone is doubtless a tool that has the power to make its user master of his or her own sector of the digital world. But, as is true for most tools, the Smartphone is a dual-sided blade, and it can cut its consumers as much as it can help them.

Therefore, the misconception about Smartphone as a threat to library services should be removed from the mindset of librarians that are not good with the use of modern technologies. The Smartphone came to improve library services in very fast ways. The users of library these days are called "Instant User", they need information instantly, therefore, Smartphone's can provide that for them anytime, anywhere and with little cost. . The use of smartphones is expected to be viewed from the positive side, that is, it can help students increase their knowledge and perspective so that it can be adopted in the learning of other materials or even other subjects and thus, helps to keep students on the positive tract. Teachers can maximize the use of smartphones for learning in the classroom and students will be able to use their smartphones to support their learning. Smartphones have many advantages, yet there are also negative sides of using this gadget. The websites that will be used in the learning must also be considered to mitigate the possibility of irrelevant materials with the learning materials. Websites from personal blogs should be avoided since the validity of the materials is still in question than those from the official websites of education or research journals. Schools should do more to facilitate the Internet network (WiFi) so that the signal reaches all classrooms in schools since this is very helpful in the teaching and learning activities either for students or teachers where smartphones offer new materials that maybe not available in the course book.

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