MANGING A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL IN NIGERIA: ISSUES, CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the continuous changes and challenges of scholarly publishing and knowledge dissemination in an era of Internet revolution. It draws lessons from a Nigerian Journal – Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management. The paper analyses the impact of the online edition of the journal as it creates opportunities for global visibility and impact. It outlines the challenges (content, managerial, quality and review issues) for publishers in developing the full potentials of open access. The paper highlights the benefits of publishing electronic copies for authors and their institutions. It addresses the roles and responsibilities of libraries within academic institutions in charting clear institutional policies for access to journals. The paper concludes that with regards to the future of scholarly journals, particularly in relation to peer review mechanism and quality control, editorial boards have a very important role to perform. Difficulties in scholarly journal publishing in Nigeria must be addressed to ensure maximum benefits of the open access movement in bridging the knowledge gap. The study recommends among others that editors and publishers of scholarly journals have to be aware of the revolution taking place in scholarly communication and influence it as much as possible, for the benefit of the Nigerian scientific and scholarly communities. They must become skilled in the use of new applications and be ready to take advantage of the new opportunities created by the ready availability of open access resources

Introduction

Journals play a central role in academics and intellectual society. According to Bello, Oluleye, Choji and Azubuike (2014) journals are professional publications devoted to disseminating original researches and commentaries on current developments within a specific discipline, sub-discipline or field of study. Journals carry articles that reports research findings in the body of knowledge of a specific discipline. Typically, journals take the form of articles presenting original research, review articles and book review. They are usually published at regular intervals, for example, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually or annually and they keep the same title. The issues are numbered consecutively and usually several people contribute to a single issue. They not only serve as a medium for the communication and exchange of ideas and current information, but they are also platform for authors/researchers to establish and improve their

professional reputation and a vehicle that provide guidance and empowerment for further research (Nnadozie, Akidi & Onyekweodiri, 2015).
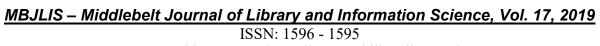
Journals are peer-reviewed or referee periodical in which scholarship relating to a particular academic discipline is published. It serves as a platform for introduction and presentation for scrutiny of new research and the critique of existing research. This underscores its huge importance in the academic community. In fact, journals are regarded as the backbone of scholarly communication (Stillwell, 2000). The scholarly journal began in the 17th Century as a means of communication. According to Ana and Jose (2005), a group of scholars under the auspices of the Royal Society would gather together regularly to present papers and share ideas. This later developed to updating members in writing who were absent as such gatherings. Since the publication of the first ever journal to be published in 1665 – *The Philosophical Transactions* (Rogel & Rogel, 2014), no one knows how many journals are available today.

According to Ulrich's estimate, there are about 25,000 of journals, publishing about 2.5 million articles per year across all disciplines and in all languages (Harnard, 2000). Thanuskodi and Venkatalakshi (2012) gave a much more recent estimate that at the global level; about 5 million articles are being published annually in about 100,000 journals. It is an established fact that journals will continue to be on the increase in order to advance knowledge and scholarship. In Africa, the development of academic journals was borne out of the need to correct through scholarship white racist views of African American history and culture, and thus the *Journal of Negro History* emerged in 1916 (Myers, 1999). Since then a lot of scholarly journals have emerged in the African content from Morocco to Kenya, from South Africa to Nigeria, from Egypt to Botswana. The beginning of academic journals in Nigeria started from the establishment of University College, Ibadan in 1948. The first reported journal was in the humanities – *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (Aboyade, 1978).

The journal attracted articles from Nigeria and beyond with a focus on political issues. Since then there have been proliferation of journals in the country, almost in all fields of study. Library and Information Science (LIS) research in Nigeria has been on a steady increase. The first LIS journal in Nigeria named "Nigerian Libraries" began publication in1964. Since then, many LIS journals have emerged as platforms for librarians and library educators to exchange ideas and experiences on professional practice, thereby keeping abreast of new knowledge and innovation in the profession (Okiy, 2003). There are 43 LIS journals in Nigeria as of today. These journals are mostly in print with very few that are online. The numbers of LIS journals in Nigeria will continue to be in the increase. The rise of Open Access initiatives and advances in Internet technology will be a major boost to this effect.

Table 1: List of LIS Journals in Nigeria as at May, 2019

S/N	Name	Publisher
1.	Journal of Library Services and Technologies	Credence Press
2.	Journal of Library and Information Science Research and Perspectives	Credence Press
3.	Zaria Journal of Librarianship	Ahmadu Bello University Library, Zaria
4.	Borno Library, Archival and Information Science Journal	Nigerian Library Association, Borno State Chapter
5.	Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management	Information Practitioners Network, Nigeria
6.	The Information Technologist	Association of Information Professionals of Nigeria

7.	Journal of Library, Educational Media and Information Studies	Medium Publishing Company and Educational Consult, Ibadan
8.	Benue Journal of Library Management and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Benue State Chapter
9.	The Information Manager	Department of Library and Information Science, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
10.	Unizik Journal of Research in Library and Information Science	Department of Library and Information Science, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
11.	Journal of Library and Information Science,	Olabisi Onabayo University, Ago-Iwoye
12.	Heartland Journal of Library and Information Science (HJOLIS)	Department of Library and Information Science, Imo State University
13.	Asulib Journal of Nigerian Library and Information Science	Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University,
14.	Samaru Journal of Information Studies	Department of Library and Information Science Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria
15.	Tincity Journal of Library, Archival and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Plateau State Chapter
16.	Journal of Health Information	Medical Library Association,
17.	Gateway Library Journal	Nigerian Library Association, Ogun State Chapter
18.	Library and Information Science Digest	Nigerian Library Association, Anambra State Chapter
19.	Owena Journal of Library and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Ondo State Chapter
20.	The Research Librarian	Library and Information Science Department, Abia State University
21.	Journal of School of Communication and Information Technology	School of Communication, Federal Polytechnic, Offa
22.	Fountain of Knowledge Journal of Library and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Ekiti State Chapter
23.	African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science	ARCHLIB, Ibadan
24.	Knowledge Manager	Nigerian Library Association, Rivers State Chapter
25.	The Nigerian Cataloguer	Nigerian Library Association, Cat and Class section
26.	Journal of Applied Information Science and Technology	
27.	Ebonyi Journal of Library and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Ebonyi State Chapter

28.	*Nigerian Libraries*	Nigerian Library Association
29.	Abuja Infolib: Journal of Library and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Federal Capital Territory Chapter
30.	Nigerian Library and Information Science Review	Nigerian Library Association, Oyo State Chapter
31.	Nigerian School Library Journal	Nigerian School Library Association
32.	Jewel Journal of Librarianship	Nigerian Library Association, Gombe State Chapter
33.	Delta Journal of Library and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Delta State Chapter
34.	NIALS Journal of Law Librarianship and Information Technology	Nigeria Institute of Advanced Legal Studies
35.	Nigerian Library Link	Enugu State University of Science and Technology Library
36.	Communicate: Journal of Library and Information Science	Library and Information Science Department, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
37.	Journal of Applied Technologies in Library and Information Management	Crew Publishers
38.	Middle Belt Journal of Library and Information Science	Nigerian Library Association, Kwara State Chapter
39.	Coal City Libraries	Nigerian Library Association, Enugu State Chapter
40.	Madonna University Journal of Research in Library and Information Science	Library and Information Science Department, Madonna University
41.	Library and Information Practitioner	Nigerian Library Association, Cross River State Chapter
42.	Nigerian Library and Information Science Trends	Nigerian Library Association, Imo State Chapter
43.	Lagos Librarian	Nigerian Library Association, Lagos State Chapter

From the table above, there are more journals (18) published by State Chapters of the Nigerian Library Association. Individual publishers account for 8 journals, while the department of library and information science of various institution publishes 9 journals. Three (3) journals are published by various sections of the Association, with institutions publishing 5.

Evolution of the Journal

The Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management (ISSN 2141-4297) commenced publication in December 2010. Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management (IIJIKM) is a refereed journal of high repute published two times in a year by Information Practitioners Network, Nigeria. The journal provides a forum for scholars, researchers, academics and practitioners to share cutting edge knowledge in library and information science. Articles written from a

sound theoretical understanding are however considered for publication. Over the years, the journal has consistently been on schedule with its publications.

Table 2: **Publication Trend of IIJIKM**

Year	Volume	Number	Number of Issues	Number of Articles
2010	1	1&2	2	21
2011	2	1&2	2	18
2012	3	1&2	2	8
2013	4	1	1	9
2014	5	1&2	2	15
2015	6	1,2 & 3	3	25
2016	7	1&2	2	24
2017	8	1&2, June, 3&4 Dec.	4	19 21
2018	9	1&2 June and 3&4 Dec.	4	18 27
Total			**22**	**205**

From the table above, IIJIKM has been consistent in publishing since 2010. The journal has published 22 issues with over 205 articles. The journal serves as a veritable platform for the dissemination of research findings among academics in LIS. According to Boyce, (2000) journals provide authors with opportunity for measuring competence as well as raise author's profile for attracting grants. It assists authors in tracking record of progress made over the years, even as they are a medium for self-archiving.

In 2014, IIJIKM launched its online edition. This is to maximise the potentials of Information and Communication Technology and the Internet. According to Ali and Nisha (2011), a journal can be called an online journal if its content is produced and stored in electronic form; if these contents can be scanned in a database and retrieved online. This is particularly true of IIJIKM. IIJIKM as an online journal can only be accessed with computer networks and the Internet. There is no doubt that online journals are on the increase, particularly over the last decade, as a result of recent development in information and communication technology. On the whole, the exact number of online journals will be difficult to estimate in a world where many journals are published on a daily basis. The fact remains that online journals have obviously greatly increased and will continue to increase.

The online version of IIJIKM has stimulated more previews and browsing of articles online, in addition to the creation of personal electronic archives. This has also created several fundamental changes in information seeking behaviour of users. IIJIKM therefore, can be accessed independent of space and time, with the ability to interact with other electronic resources, save user's time, provides value addition such as searchability and can be read by multiple users simultaneously and cannot be mutilated, stolen, lost or vandalized. The online version has helped to boost international followership and readership.

Open Access Journal Publishing Models

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has revolutionized teaching, learning and research, particularly scholarly literature using the World Wide Web which provides various opportunities to publish in a variety of formats with unlimited reach. UNESCO (2010) defines open access (OA) as a knowledge source deposited in an internet public domain for public consumption without any restrictions. Alam (2014) defines OA as a movement intended to provide free access to peer-reviewed content that can be easily shared. According to BOAI, the basic definition of OA: "is the free availability of information resource on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full texts of these articles"(Budapest Open Access Initiative, 2002). From all these definitions, it is evident that OA is about providing free access to scholarly works without any restrictions.

The Open access movement came into existence, following the Budapest Open Access Initiative in 2002, the Bethesda Statement on Open Access Publishing in 2003 and the Berlin Declaration in 2003, often referred to as the BBB declarations (Suber, 2012). The Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI) was a public statement of principles, relating to open access to the research literature. The declaration required that all peer-reviewed scholarly works are made available in the public domains and also provide complete authority to the users to download and be able to distribute without any restrictions. Months later, Bethesda statement on open access publishing of 2003 came into existence and focused on the medium of disseminating scholarly literature. Specifically, it requires that authors and rights holders provide free and unrestricted access to all users. In addition, authors were to deposit all copies of their works into a local repository.

The Bethesda and Berlin Statements agrees on total removal of every form of rights by authors and grants permission to use and re-use, subject to attribution. Thus, the aim of "open access'' is to grant users unhindered access to use and re-use digital content. Simply put, Open Access literature is digital, online, free of charge and free of most copyright and licensing restrictions. Therefore any kind of digital content- texts, audio, datasets, research outputs, images, video, music, movies should be accessed freely. The basic idea of Open Access is to make research literature available online without price barriers and without permission barriers (Bjork & Solomon, 2014).

There are 3 basic Open Access (OA) publishing models-Green OA, Gold OA and Platinum OA The Green Open Access publishing model require authors to simply deposit their manuscript in an OA repository. Green OA makes author's peer review content freely available to all comers, and does not charge readers or their institutions for access. A Green OA policy at a university can cover the institution's entire research output regardless of where authors choose to publish (Suber, 2012). The other model where authors pay a fee to have an article published, and the publisher then makes the article freely available electronically, after publication is called Gold Open Access publishing model. Gold OA simply require authors to submit their manuscript to Open Access Journals. According to Pietsch (2017) Platinum OA means that publication is openly available to readers from the publishers' site and that no fees have to be paid on the side of the author. In other words, platinum OA is simply free access to published work either in Gold OA (Journals website) or in Green OA (repositories). Information Impact: Journal of Information and Knowledge Management (IIJIKM) adopts the Gold OA, this is because it is self- sustaining as well as provides increase access to the published version of an article, without restrictions or barriers, thereby giving authors visibility and impact. In addition, the implementation is simple and immediate, made possible by the Internet

Information Impact is therefore an open access journal distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution Licence (http://creativecommons.org/licence/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium provided the original work is cited. Through its strategic partnership with African Journals Online (AJOL), it increases more opportunities for global visibility and impact. African Journals Online (AJOL) is an initiative aimed at providing access to research published in Africa. AJOL offers free access to the contents of African academic publications. It serves as a repository for African Scientific information. This partnership enhances author's visibility and global impact. For instance, the IIJIKM AJOL Abstract view and Article downloads for January – June 2017, in table 5, generated by Google Analytics attest to this.

Table 3: Article Views and Article Downloads of IIJIKM for Jan - June 2017

Months	Abstract View	Article Downloads
January	172	2193
February	244	2467
March	314	2541
April	252	1827
May	163	1815
June	326	2646
TOTAL	1471	13489

Source: www.informationimpact.org

Table 3 reveals article views and downloads of IIJIKM for January to June 2017. This is generated by Google Analytics. At a glance it shows the number of times abstract of articles are viewed and full download of articles per month. On the whole, articles in IIJIKM have been downloaded several times (13,489). This lends credence to the fact that OA downloaded and cited more often than non OA articles. There is no doubt that OA journals are on the rise in their submissions and citation impact (Bjork & Solomon, 2014).

However, IIJIKM as a medium of scholarly communication is faced with significant challenges. The challenges are as follows:

i. **Content:** IIJIKM operates an open licence from Creative Commons (CC). According to Kuseka and Mushowani (2014) Creative Commons provides a framework for copyright holders who want to assign their work to the public domain. For instance, IIJIKM is licensed under the CC Attribution licence (CC-BY), which allows any use, provided the user attributes the work to the original author. This is the license recommended by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA). Like every other OA journal, IIJIKM seeks to reduce access gap. The increase impact of Internet has IIJIKM within the reach of researchers, research institutes, authors, editors and libraries. However, OA journals are not universal, they are restricted by filtering and censorship barriers, language barriers, handicap access barriers and connectivity barriers (Bjork & Solomon, 2014).

ii. **Peer Review/Quality**: Some authors have argued that OA journals bypass peer review (Laakso & Bjork, 2016; Faye & Shan, 2014), but this is not true for IIJIKM. Articles in IIJIKM undergo quality peer review process. Peer review is done by dedicated experts. Usually, incentives are given to

referees to participate in the peer review process. This has impacted the quality of articles over the years.

iii. **Managerial:** The importance of formal meetings of editorial boards of journals cannot be over emphasized. According to Dymek (n.d) editorial board meetings are appropriate avenues to deal with ethical issues, journals' scope and mission, review of submission/publication fees, rebranding, restructuring and a wide range of publication issues. This is an important aspect not to be neglected by publishing houses. In such meetings, decisions are taken on several issues bothering on technology to be deployed, and copyright issues.

Conclusion

Journals disseminate scholarly information for the development of the society in all ramifications. Journal publishers are increasingly embracing Open Access. The basic idea of OA is to make research findings available online without price barriers and permission barriers. Thus, the increase impact of Internet has made OA journals within the reach of researchers, practitioners, students and educational /research institutions worldwide. IIJIKM is among the very few Library and Information Science OA journals in Nigeria. It embraces the Gold OA publishing model, because of its convenience and self-sustaining capabilities. IIJIKM distributes its articles from African Journals Online (AJOL) platform- an initiative aimed at bridging access gap, particularly of African literature. AJOL also serves as a repository for African Scientific Information. there is no gainsaying the fact that OA articles are downloaded and cited more than non OA article, With the rapid advances in communication technologies, mobile technologies and the Internet, there will be more Library and Information science OA journals in Nigeria. To this end, libraries, editors and publishers have a critical role to play in charting a clear cut direction for access to scholarly journals in Nigeria.

Recommendations

It is hereby recommended that:

i. Publishers of LIS journals should embrace Gold OA publishing model. This is as a result of the self-sustaining nature of Gold OA.

ii. University management should direct faculty to deposit final manuscripts of their published articles in their university OA institutional repositories

iii. Libraries must take the initiative to establish, maintain and run open access repositories for their institutions. Libraries must take full responsibility for developing, designing frameworks (including technical) for the overall quality of metadata.

iv. Libraries and LIS journal publishers should create awareness on open access journals among academics and administrators at the highest level. This is with a view to get more people to buy-in into the open access movement. Most academics and administrators are sceptical about anything ''open access''. This attitude has helped to discourage the establishment of institutional repositories in some cases.

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