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INTERNET ADOPTION FOR STUDIES BY STUDENT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, MINNA

DR. E.C. MADU

The internets as we all know it today is a function of direct effort by U. S. researchers who tried to communicate and link-up with the use of computer (Madu, 2005). This determination is a result of the cold war between the East represented by Russia and the West represented by the United State of America. It was a calculated effort through research to ensure dominance over the East. P38.

Precisely, the internet was started in 1969 under a contract by the Advanced Research Project Agency (ARPA) whose major objective then was to connect from major computers at Universities in the South Western United States. According to (Ibegwam, 2002: 47) the internet at this stage was to ensure that there was no break in communication at that critical period of cold war even if some of the sites were destroyed by nuclear attach.

-With the successful implementation of the above objective and in realization of the apparent benefits,

> The computer base of the military was expanded to include other networks for scientific research agencies, and some other networks covering the colleges and universities. These various networks were inter-linked so that researchers, scientists, governments and students would communicate and exchange ideas across the networks (Ayo 2001: 82).

Nyako 1997, described internet or international network as a network of thousands of computers, some of these computer are simple, while others are powerful and sophisticated. For him, internet can be used interchangeably with a super high-way along which information as texts, audio, pictures, videos travel world wide p77.

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Internet plays a crucial function in the teaching, learning and research in any academic institute Kumar and Kaur (2006) and Igun (2005) have asserted that academic institutions cannot do without internet services especially in this era of information globalization, explosion and superhighway. According to Adomi, Omoleko and Otolo, 2004, Ojedokun and Owolabi 2003, internet enhances teaching, studying, research publishing and communication.

Another study by Idowu (1997) examined the use of computerized information system in Nigerian Universities and research institute libraries and found out that it is significant toward attitudinal change.

Obioha (2005) posited that ICT tools and researchers in their information seeking aid use of information speedily. It helps in acquisition of more knowledge. She also found out that and from international and local agencies supports research activities including the provision of ICT tools, training and re-training. She reported that insufficient ICT tools and centres also show down research work.

According to Ubogu (2000), information seekers increasingly want instant, individual access to information without any mediation.

The perceived usefulness of the internet was studied by Akiola et al (2005) to evaluate the information seeking behaviour of University of Ibadan students on the internet. The results indicated that students use the internet for a variety of activities but needed to be taught strategies on how to obtain information on the internet.

In Nigeria, some research work has been carried out on the usage of the internet and ICT in several educational environments. In Jagboro (2003) the use of the internet was rated fourth as a source of academic information by postgraduate students of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife because of the limited number of access points available at the time, while the University's Library was rated first. Ajuwon (2003) showed that first year clinical and nursing students in a Nigerian Teaching Hospital do not have sufficient computer skills and internet use

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proficiency. The impact of internet usage on academic performance was studied by Osunade et al (2004) using two Universities as case study. The control group did not have access to the internet, while the experimental group had access to the internet. The results showed a significant difference between the academic performances of the two groups.

By the 2004 most institutions and university towns had internet access through the University or through commercial ISPs in the town. Thus, Agbonlahor (2005) showed that many academic staff have computers and access the internet for academic information in a study on the adoption of ICT by academic staff in 10 Nigerian universities. The perceived usefulness of the internet was studied by Akinola et al, (2005) to evaluate the information seeking behaviour of University of Ibadan student on the internet. The results indicate students use the internet for a variety of activities but need to be taught strategies on how to obtain information on the internet.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to explore the difference in internet use in terms of information seeking and communication activities of the students of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, Nigeria, at different levels for learning purposes. The specific objectives therefore include:

To explore what proportion of students are actually making use of some internet resources.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Because of the large number of students involved in this study, the survey method was adopted. Marshall (1997) Ferenkell and Wallen (1993) and Alreck and Settle (1985) have recommended the survey method when information is to be gathered from a large number of people.

POPULATION

The population of this comprised all students of the Federal University of technology Minna, Nigeria, during the 2006/2007 academic session which is a population of 15,000 students. 10% of this population which is 1,500 was selected as sample for the study. The 10% of the population chosen was as a result of time and financial constraint.

SAMPLING DESIGN

The proportional stratified sampling design was used for this study. This is a process in which certain subgroups or strata are selected for the sample in the same proportion as they exist in the population. The sample here was stratified into four levels by year e.g 200 level, 300 level, 400 level and 500 level; with a random selection of 10% from each level. This stratification increases the reliability and the confidence obtainable from survey data.

The following procedure was followed to obtain the stratification of the students' levels.

Total number of students	15,000
Sample selected	1,500 (10% of 15,000)
Total number of 200 level students	425
Sample selected	42.5 (10% of 425)
Total number of 300 level students	280
Sample selected	28 (10% of 280)
Total number of 400 level students	330
Sample selected	33 (10% of 330)
Total number of 500 level students	465
Sample selected	46.5 (10% of 465)

Therefore total number of students for data collection = 1,500 (i.e 425 + 280

+ 330 + 465).

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected by sending questionnaire to the four schools in the university. A total of 1200 out of 1500 students returned their questionnaire giving a respond rate of 66.3% which is presented in table 1.

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE

Level	Total	Sample 10%	Respondent Percentage
200	4250	425	360
300	2800	280	220
400	3300	330	250
500	4650	465	370
Total	15,000	1500	1,200

$$\frac{100}{1500} \times 1500$$

= 66.67%

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected was analysed using the statistical package for the Social Sciences. Descriptive statistics was employed in the reportage of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aims of this study are to determine the usage of the internet resources by the student and identify the reasons for the potential relevance or dissatisfaction in the use of the internet resources. Data analysis and finding were based on the objectives of the study.

TABLE 2: THE USE OF DISCUSSION GROUPS IN LEARNING

level	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
500	(28) 37.8%	(20) 27%	(14) 18.9%	(6) 8.1%	(6) 8.1%	(74) 100%
400	(12) 26.1%	(4) 8.7%	(20) 43.5%	(6) 13%	(4) 8.7%	(46) 100%
300	(12) 54.5%	(6) 27.3%	(2) 9.1%	(2) 9.1%	(0) 0%	(22) 100%
200	(2) 20%	(2) 20%	(6) 60%	(0) 0%	(0) 0%	(10) 100%

TABLE 3: THE USE OF WWW IN LEARNING

level	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
500	(28) 36.8%	(10) 13.2%	(22) 28.9%	(8) 10.5%	(8) 10.5%	(76) 100%
400	(10) 21.71%	(8) 17.4%	(8) 17.4%	(6) 13%	(14) 30.4%	(46) 100%
300	(12) 46.1%	(0) 0%	(10) 38.5%	(0) 0%	(4) 15.4%	(26) 100%
200	(2) 20%	(2) 20%	(6) 60%	(0) 0%	(0) 0%	(10) 100%

From tables 2 -4, it is obvious that E-mail remain the most commonly used internet resource in learning. This is closely followed by Discussion Groups. Ranking third here is the use of World Wide Web (www) in the learning process. It

is pertinent to mention here that the more years the students spend in the school; the more they use these resources.

TABLE 4: THE USE OF E-MAIL IN LEARNING

level	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Total
500	(26) 30.2%	(18) 20.9%	(24) 27.9%	(4) 4.7%	(14) 16.7%	(86) 100%
400	(18) 22.2%	(15) 18.5%	(29) 48.1%	(6) 7.4%	(3) 3.7%	(71) 100%
300	(8) 18.2%	(8) 18.2%	(28) 63.6%	(0) 0%	(0) 0%	(44) 100%
200	(0) 0%	(8) 25%	(12) 37.5%	(12) 37.5%	(0) 0%	(32) 100%

The e-mail which is the most commonly used in learning was indicated (see table 4) 16.7% always by the 500 level student who are more involved in the use of world wide web ranked second with 10% of the 500 level in studying it as always in its usage. This is the second commonly used. The third commonly used in that order is the use of Discussion Group. Here, the use of Discussion Group in learning by respondents was indicated by 8.7% of the 500 level students.

This set of results indicate that more senior students (500 level) use the internet more. Perhaps experience as a factor might explain the relatively high and consistent use of the internet resource than the junior levels.

The aim of this research was to find out how the students of the Federal University of Technology make use of internet resource for learning. Altogether, the work showed that the students make use of internet resources such as World Wide Web (www), Electronic mail (e-mail) and Discussion Groups (GD) among others.

The most common way of locating information for learning according to the respondents is the electronic mail (e-mail). The study also showed that 500 level students frequently used most of the internet resources more than the students in the lower levels.

The recommendation of this study is that government and university authorities appreciate the enormous potential of internet and assist in making it readily available for students use. In this regard, the provision of broadband internet access is a step in the right direction. There is also the need for government to promote private sector participation through policies that effective regulate the provision of technological innovation.

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