

# Usability effectiveness of a federated search system for electronic theses and dissertations in Nigerian institutional repositories

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## Abstract

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the usability effectiveness of a webware for electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) in Nigerian repositories. The webware (etdsearch.com.ng) is a web application system that curates ETDs from three sampled Federal government-owned universities. The system also links users to the repositories where the theses and dissertations are hosted.

### Design/methodology/approach

The case study research strategy was adopted for the study. Sixty postgraduate students from three universities were randomly selected. A usability evaluation questionnaire based on the ISO 9241-11 framework was used to collect data after performing pre-defined queries/tasks based on the informational and transactional query models. The research questions were analysed using the median of the performance score ( $f_x$ ) of the three universities for each item evaluated, while the Kruskal-Wallis test by ranks was used to test the null hypothesis at a 5% level of significance.

### Findings

The study answered two research questions and tested two null hypotheses on the usability effectiveness of the webware based on the informational and transactional queries. The participants found the ETD search system effectively useable. In addition, there was no significant difference in the opinions of the participants.

### Research limitations/implications

The webware used simulated repositories as a feed bed for the ETDs in order to have control over the workability of the repositories. Thus, the results may differ slightly when "live" repositories are used.

### Practical implications

The effectiveness of a webware that aggregates ETDs in Nigerian repositories will present libraries in Nigeria with evidence on how these systems work and can be improved upon.

### Originality/value

There is a dearth of literature on practical usability studies of digital information systems in Nigerian libraries.

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