INNOVATIVE LAW LIBRARY SERVICES IN NIGERIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT
The law library being a living and growing organism, has embraced some innovations in her services. This paper evaluates the innovative law library services in Nigeria. This paper traced the history of law library in Nigeria. It highlighted the types of libraries which include law libraries and discussed the seven types of Law libraries. It also discusses the traditional services rendered by law libraries and explained the innovative services obtainable in today’s law libraries and highlights the materials or tools through which the services are rendered, and of course, the challenges encountered in the course of service delivery to the library users and the possible solution to the problems identified.

Keywords: Library, Law Library, Innovations, Law Library Services and Legal practices.

Introduction
The essence of setting up any library is to serve clients and librarians are crucial in delivering this service using appropriate and available resources. Law library resources are essential and integral part of the study and practice of law Both students of law and legal practitioners usually spend a great deal of time in law libraries as their laboratory. It has been correctly opined that there is no class of men, professional or otherwise as dependent upon books as the lawyers. There is no library which so directly pertains to the interest which it is designed to serve as the law library. The lawyer's books are his tools without which he would be unable to provide for himself and his family. Anaeme, F.O. &Anyaegbu, M. also observed that law books are lawyers' tools of trade and a measure of their professional competence.

Library is a collection of information sources, resources and services, organized for use, and maintained by an institution, a private individual and public body (Anaeme, 2015). The primary concern of the library, right from the very beginning, has been the communication of knowledge, ideas and thoughts from one person, group of persons or generation to the other.

There are six major types of libraries they are; Academic libraries serve colleges and universities, Public libraries serve cities and towns of all types, School libraries serve students from Kindergarten to high school, Special libraries are in specialized environments, such as hospitals, National Library, and private library .corporations, museums, courts, the military, private business, the government(Akinyemi, 2017).

A law library, for the purpose of today's discussion is the library set to provide legal materials to assist Judicial officers, other members of the court and their clients, law scholars and students in academic institutions and other law officers in ministries, police stations and other law related bodies. Conceptually, law libraries are specifically designed to provide materials to enhance legal information provision for education, research, and practices (Olayinka &Ozor 2017). These libraries are manned by professional librarians that have a cognate experience in the field of librarianship. The libraries play a unique and integral role in shaping the quality of the legal system at all levels by the virtue of their unique collection and services. There are many services rendered in these libraries; such as current awareness services, selective
dissemination of information, indexing services, user education, answering users query, information and reference services among others. A special library is set to provide information on a particular discipline to a targeted person/organization, rather than general materials for general public (Gusau 2017). The purpose of a law library is narrow; the scope/width of concern is to attend to the immediate needs of a targeted client(s) - the Lawyers, both practicing and students.

History of law libraries in Nigeria
Law libraries in Nigeria were creations of circumstance by the colonial administration with the introduction of English legal system in the country in 1862 (Jegede, 1985). The setting up of various administrative departments and the establishments of various courts of justice by the three regional governments witnessed the emergence of special law library collection to support the administration and dispensation of justice for good governance. The earlier law libraries were found in the Federal Ministry of Justice, Lagos, as part of British colonial instrument of social, economic and political development of the area now known as Nigeria. The law library of the Federal Ministry of Justice, Lagos, is said to have books stocked in the library and affixed with ownership stamp dating back to 1806. The law office library belonged to a reputed private practitioner Christopher Alexander Sapara Williams (1855-1915). He was reputed for his oratory, knowledge of unwritten customary law, and for his possession of one of the finest and largest law libraries along the West Coast (Elias, 1955-57). There was also a one room library which continued in existence until its holdings formed part of the main stock/collection of the present High Court of Lagos State library. There was a quasi-public library, the General Government Library located in the former Secretariat, Marina. Its rich collection consisted mainly of central government publications and the papers of the Old Legislative Council as the Central law-makings body for the territory. The government publications formed part of the stock of the library and was later inherited by the National Library of Nigeria, while the parliamentary papers went to the former Library of Parliament that is now the National Assembly Library now in Abuja.

Types of law library
Legislative Libraries: These are libraries of the legislative arm of government. Legislative Libraries are also referred to as Parliamentary Libraries, or Congress Law Libraries. They contain materials to aid the legislature in legal drafting and debate. Examples of legislative libraries include National Assembly Library and State House of Assembly Library in the states. The holdings of legislative library are varied and include hansards, gazettes, statutory instruments, laws, etc.
Ministry of Justice Law Libraries: These are Libraries serving the ministries of justices of the federal and state governments. They include the Federal Ministry of Justice Law Library, Abuja, and Ministry of Justice Law Libraries at the state levels. The libraries provide materials to support the ministry of Justice staff in litigation and decision making.
Judiciary/ Court Libraries: Judiciary or court libraries are found within the court premises and established to serve the Judiciary arm of government. They serve the judges, magistrates and practicing lawyers in the preparation of cases and justice dispensation. They include the Supreme Court Library Abuja, Court of Appeal Library, Federal and State High Court Law Libraries in the country.
Academic Law Library: These are the libraries of the Faculties of law in the Universities, the Nigeria Law School libraries at the various campuses and Research Institutes that are academic in status such as the Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (NIALS) Lagos. They stock materials to support teaching and research in law.
Research Institute Law Libraries: These are law libraries established to serve research institutes. Sometimes institute libraries are classified as academic libraries depending on the status of the parent institution. Research institute law libraries include the Nigerian Judicial Institute Library, the Nigerian Law Reform Commission Library Abuja, Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, (NIPSS) Kuru.
Quasi Law Libraries: Quasi law libraries are those libraries established by institutions that are Para-legal in nature. They include the libraries of the Custom and Exercise Department, the prison, Nigerian Drug Law
Enforcement Agency, (NDLEA), ICPC, EFCC, the army, police, state security services and the Banks. The libraries contain specialized materials serving the needs of the establishing bodies.

**Law Office or Chamber Libraries:** These are private law libraries found in law offices and chambers. They serve the need of the legal practitioners in the preparation of matters to be argued before the courts. A good law library is a sine qua non to efficient legal practices. A lawyer's library has been variously described as his laboratory, his stethoscope, a tool of his trade and measure of his professional competence.

**Services Rendered by the Law Library**

Azubuike (1999) identified some information services offered in the libraries such as; Indexing and Abstracting, Bibliographic Instruction, Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) , Bibliographic Services, Inter-Library Loan; library exhibitions including display of new additions to the library, compilation of bibliographies, Current Awareness Services (CAS) reference services, internet/e-mail services, circulation services, photocopying services etc. Some of these services are discussed below;

1. **Indexing and abstracting service:** This is an essential service offered in every library. It has to do with recording useful information on slips or cards which can be consulted for providing information to the readers, while indexing enable users to locate the books that are available in the subject areas they need. Abstracting services produce the summaries of the contents of reading materials in the library thereby serving as time saver for the library users. Most of the law reports now contain the name and subject index.

2. **Current Awareness Services:** Information is an important resource for the legal profession and without it the profession cannot function effectively. The Current Awareness Service can be very useful to inform researchers in the legal field, because the slightest change to legislations, rules or interim report on any ongoing trials can alter the legal world and practice. The CAS can be made more effective by using modern communication technologies like group mail facility, SMS through the mobile phones, by creating Online ‘blog’ or a Newsletter for providing CAS(current awareness service) this will help the entire legal fraternity including practitioners.

3. **Library Orientation and Instruction:** The reference librarian conducts orientation for registered users; this will enable users to know where the materials are stocked, whether the resource is available and how to locate materials in the library. Dada, (2011) sees user instruction as a process of making library patrons to learn how to make effective and efficient use of the library resources through the acquisition of skills in identification, location, retrieval and exploitation of information.

4. **Assisting in Legal research:** The Judicial librarian’s duty goes beyond merely training users to find sources of legal information. The Judicial librarians must teach library users not only how legal authority is located within published electronic and print sources, but also how to select and adopt the most reliable, cost-effective, and efficient research strategies and sources.

5. **Bibliographic verification:** The bibliographic tool is used for the purpose of verifying the correctness and completeness of the use of information. He further stated that it provides information about publications. To achieve this, the reference librarian consults and searches both manual and electronic versions of standard bibliographic work. The bibliographic tools for this verification include: - catalogue bibliographies, abstracts and indexes, yearbooks, travel guides, gazettes, dictionaries, almanacs and encyclopedia.

6. **Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI):** In attending to the needs of Hon. Judges and Magistrates in the library, there is the need for individualized library services. This is because of their different divisions and specialty. Selective dissemination of information therefore offers such individualized service delivery. According to Adegbore, (2010) libraries have developed a wide range of activities to keep the clientele abreast of new and current developments. Such services may be directed to the organization as a whole or tailored to individual client. This sophisticated service is selective dissemination of information (SDI).

7. **Information Services:** Edoka (2006) described information services as activities that involve the in-depth analysis of the intellectual content of literature of specialist subject area and its systematic organization and dissemination in form of bibliographies, indexes, abstracts, review journals current contents, other alerting reporting and journal literature for the use of specialists. Other traditional services offered by law librarians for effective and efficient service delivery include:
8. Acquisitions: This involves acquiring legal and non-legal information materials necessary for practice and procedure of the law. There is usually an acquisition policy which varies from one library to the other. The policy guides the libraries at ensuring that relevant and appropriate materials are selected, ordered and acquired for the Judicial Library.

9. Technical Services: The librarian is responsible for the cataloguing and classifying of the acquired materials, either in print or electronic format in order to facilitate the proper organization of the materials. This enhances quick access to the materials when needed. Moy’s Classification scheme was adopted in classifying legal materials.

10. Notre-Up Service: This service entails updating of enacted legislation whenever changes to law occur. In effecting Notre-up services, the amendment is noted, typed out and pasted on the appropriate page in the statute book. In addition to this, copies of the amendment or changes are sent to Honorable Judges and other library users are notified of the changes. This will in no doubt guide them in the adjudication of justice and forestall errors in the dispensation of justice. Some of the terms used are ‘repealed’, ‘deleted’, ‘amended’, ‘substituted’ etc.

The Innovative Services

Service Innovation may be defined as the use and improvement of various latest technologies to provide better and timely services to the users within a reasonable cost for the development of the users as well as the society as a whole. Service Innovation in library services can improve the effectiveness of library knowledge management which ultimately helps not only to the Judicial officers and students but also to the faculties, research scholars of various institutions as well. With computer and internet, the specialized services (SDI, CAS, Indexing, Abstracting, Translation, Literature Search, Bibliographic Listing etc.) mentioned above would actually take shorter time to render (Gusau, 2017). The library of the 21st century is a well-tailored platform to deal with them and therefore places the librarian with the right opportunity to be more useful and more efficient. In today’s world library system is not a job where only one professional person is appointed to handle all the activities of library but it has become a job with a varied activities handled by many professionals like Librarian, Librarian Administrator, Content Developer, Content Designer, Content Manager, Web Site operator, Data Entry operators etc, to provide effective and efficient services to interested people. Libraries also require certain service innovations so that it can fulfill the need of users (Tiwari, 2016).

Current innovations to library services agree with the fifth law of Dr. Ranganathan that the library is a growing organism. It is my humble opinion that the new technology that evolved and enmeshed the library has not changed the laws, it only introduced new modus operandi. To live in the present information world, information sourcing, processing, presenting and preserving (librarianship) styles must change.

Use of OPAC and Web OPAC for Searching library materials: OPAC means Online Public Access Catalogue: It is a database of library or group of libraries so that any library user can access such database to know the study materials (books, CDs, DVDs, cassettes, videotapes, articles, etc.) available in the concerned library or libraries. OPAC can also be used by the library users from their homes with the help of Web OPAC. Such innovated service saves the time of users in searching their required study materials stored in various libraries.

Inter Library Loan/ Library consortium: It is not possible for any library to collect all types of materials and store them under one roof. The major purpose of such establishment is to promote the sharing of resources among law libraries. In this Inter Library Loan System one library on the request of a law library user can bring resources from another library for a specified duration only. Such facilities are quite helpful specifically for the research scholars.

E-mail Communication: Through electronic mail, resources and questions maybe posted to librarian from the library users which in turn the librarian will reply back via electronic mail. It saves the problem of sourcing for the materials physically. The only problem associated with this medium is that it removes the values derived from social contact with library users as well as absence of face to face discussions.
Diverse Electronic Discussion Forum: An online forum such as Facebook enables participants to pose questions and articulate views.

Legal Data Bases: Online legal databases are now being used by many law libraries across the world to access legal resources. LEXISNEXIS and WESTLAW and also Law Pavilions. Database houses a huge amount of data and research. In addition to the aforementioned, the application of interactive social media technology to the service delivery of the library has made the services to be more effective. The social media tools are web based and mobile technologies that can be used to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. They include Wikis, Blogs, RSS, Face book, Podcast, Twitter, iPad, iPhone, iPod, YouTube, 2Go. Germain (2011) identified some applications used in libraries such as blog, collaborative encyclopedias, RSS.

Law Blogs: A blog (derived from web blog) is a web site made up of posts that are arranged chronologically, and are achieved by date and category. A library is a Blog on law. Blogs have become useful updating services for various legal specialties, keeping law professionals immediately up to date on developments and issues in their areas of practice. Blogs have acquired a certain status, being cited by court.

Collaborative Encyclopedia: Wikipedia is the best example of a collaborative encyclopedia where everyone can freely contribute and edit. It is based on the wiki technology. Wikipedia is one of the most visited web sites worldwide.

Really Simple Syndication (RSS): This is a syndication format developed by Netscape in 1999, which has become very popular for aggregating updates to blogs and new sites. RSS presents an alternative delivery platform because the user gets only relevant content, is notified automatically when new content arrives, and is not required to learn new technologies. The user can decide which content to subscribe to automatically from the millions of blogs, new services, and content provider offering RSS services.

Benefits of the Innovative Services
1. Access to legal information from anywhere around the world. You do not need to travel to any specific location to access legal information/resources of the law library.
2. Round the clock (24/7) accessibility–no restriction to operating hours. Funding is less expensive because there are little or no costs associated with constructing/purchasing/leasing large physical building; maintenance of the facility utilities (water, electricity, gas, phones, internet); staff (fewer people are needed to develop, maintain, and support a law library)
3. Multiple users can access the same resource at the same time (though some resources may have a limit to the number of users who can access it at the same time)
4. Users can have immediate access to most current resources - access isn't delayed or prohibited due to holds, restrictions for in-library use only, or incorrect shelving, etc.
5. There is no physical degradation of the resource due to handling, storage, or vandalism.
6. With the innovative service law libraries aren't limited in terms of size.
7. Digital services in law libraries can potentially cater better to the needs of clients by providing materials that users want and actually use. Some resources may only be officially purchased by the library from a vendor once a certain number of users have accessed the item. In this sense, items that are rarely or never used are not added into the collection and are not paid for, saving the library money.
8. The law librarian could also digitize internally (locally) generated materials (court rulings, decisions, conference, seminar papers etc.) by the judges of his court, renown scholars of his institute etc., upload same on the web to share with others. With all these advantages we are obliged to try our best shot at reforming/ modernizing to the benefit of clients.

Problems of Effective Service Delivery in Law Libraries
Despite the importance of judicial library services with the use of ICT, there are some challenges that militate against the effective delivery of these services. These challenges include; Funding, Obsolete library
resources, Epileptic power supply, Scarcity of professional librarians, lack of technological know-how (technophobia), Non-conducive operational hours, poor telecommunication facilities amongst others. In the same vein, Adekunmisi (2005:28), also reported that the challenges that the Judiciary face are inadequate and qualified staff to man the libraries, lack of funds and a lack of constant power supply. In corroboration to this, Akpoghome and Idiegbeyan-Ose (2010) agrees that inadequate technical staff, unstable staff and insufficient computer literate manpower are the other problems experienced. The constant electricity power supply is the backbone of the virtual library, since the electricity power supply is required to power air conditioners, computer systems and make hardware and software work. Akpoghome and Idiegbeyan-Ose (2010) corroborate that a lack of a constant power supply, as experienced in Nigeria, is a serious drawback and that it is a challenge to the law libraries.

**Conclusion**

There is a great deal of benefit and potential embedded in use of innovative services in law libraries. It is a welcome development that law libraries are already embracing information technology tools across many of the core activities. Although there is still some level of resistant, skepticism and fear surrounding the adoption of these modern technologies, the use of these modern technologies within librarians in law libraries is still minimal. A suitable plan and strong evaluation need to be looked at, while pioneering information technologies in law libraries. Users need to be informed of the new technologies in the library. And staff needs to be trained in order to accomplish the task of planning information technology network in the law library. There should be always be sessions of training and retraining of both the librarians and users of law libraries on the innovative services available in the law library in Nigeria.

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