Digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services among librarians in selected university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Henry C. Otobrise
Serials Librarian
Benson Idahosa University
Benin City, Nigeria

Abieyuwa Benita Omagbon
Principal Library Officer
John Harris Library
University of Benin
Benin City, Nigeria

Abstract
The study canvassed for the concept of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services among librarians in selected university libraries in South-South Nigeria. This study investigated the existence of the concept of digital marketing in selected academic libraries as well as the benefits derived from digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services. The study adopted a 4-point rating scale questionnaire containing 20 priced items which was administered to 100 librarians in four university libraries in south-south Nigeria, out of which 65 librarians responded. An item by item analysis of result was carried out by means of a table and simple percentage of respondents score. The result indicated that majority of the 65 librarians who completed and returned the questionnaire had a positive attitude towards digital marketing/pricing of library, information and knowledge products and services and are also aware of the numerous benefits of digital marketing in the digital age. Based on the result of the survey, it was concluded that certain information products and services can be marketed/priced and that the age-long practice of giving all manner of library, information and knowledge services free of charge should be reconsidered.

Keywords: Products, Digital information Products, Digital marketing, Information and knowledge products, Information marketing, Knowledge management, Library products, University libraries, South-South, Nigeria

Introduction
The concept of digital marketing has gained prominence since the advent of the information and communication technology (ICT). According to Rowley (2011), the term marketing refers to the management process which identifies, anticipates, and supplies customer requirements efficiently and profitably. While digital marketing on the other hand refers to the promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of electronic media. For example, advertising mediums that might be used as part of the digital marketing strategy of a business or organization could include promotional efforts made via the Internet, social media, mobile phones and electronic billboards, as well as via digital and television and radio channels (businessdictionary.com, 2016). However, digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services is a comprehensive term that describes all the processes and interactions that result in promotion and sales of different information products and services for the library and information firm using digital technologies.

As librarians understand the confusion associated with information overload, it is their responsibility to devise means to keep the students aware of the shortcomings of unevaluated internet information. To ameliorate some of the
consequences of ICT resulting in underutilization of academic libraries, effort directed to promoting and creating awareness of library services is imperative. Librarians can promote the use of the library through other means such as marketing of library services to its users.

Marketing of library services, according to Jestin and Parameswari (2002), involves activities such as identifying user’s needs, designing suitable services or products to meet their needs, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and serve the users. It is a systematic process which entails the combination of planning, concentrating on customer needs and satisfaction with appropriate products and services (Kendadamath, n.d.). According to Broady-Preston and Steel (2008), it encompasses staff within the organization, product perception within the society and any potential method of customers receiving a message about the organization, its products and services.

The information age has brought with it growth in information generation and use in a period where there is excess information in circulation (information explosion). This has led to unprecedented growth in the information industry, and also dramatic growth in services, revenue, and coherence of the information and knowledge industry over the last decade, where a society that consumes and generates the most knowledge and information is perceived as the strongest society. Though the marketing of knowledge and information services is a concept of comparatively recent origin, it has now emerged as an important area for libraries and information centres with the emergence of digital technologies. The main objective of digital marketing of library services to customers is to initially identify current and potential users and begin to develop a relationship with them. Academic libraries can achieve such relationship with users through the application of digital marketing strategies in rendering library services. Digital marketing strategies are processes that allow an organization to concentrate its resources on the optimal opportunities with the goal of increasing patronage and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Kendadamath, n.d.). Without marketing strategies, library users are unlikely to be fully aware of what the library can offer them. Although, factors such as perception, attitude and digital skills have been noted as some of the factors militating against the marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in academic libraries (Alemna, 2001; Al-Bahrani, Gray, 2004; Estall & Stephens, 2011; and Pathak & Jain, 2013).

Libraries should have a clear plan to market their digital services. Several studies have been conducted to look into this aspect. Libraries need to adopt a coherent approach instead of scattered ones. Further, it is of utmost importance to deliver the right service at the right time to appropriate users in the right place in a cost effective manner. Therefore, libraries should try to formulate marketing strategies. It will also aim to satisfy the five laws of library science. Libraries must continue to evolve to respond to the digital, financial and societal changes.

If libraries do not come up to the expectations of the users, then commercial ventures may grab the opportunity. To counter the situation, the National library of Scotland (NLS) decided to introduce effective marketing relations to ensure the awareness of library sources and services among stakeholders. Harrington & Li6 found that marketing initiatives require thorough examination of competitors.

Promotional tools that can be used by academic libraries to promote their services and resources include: digital media, such as the library's website, e-mail
lists, blogs and podcasts; print materials, such as posters, handouts and giveaways; events such as orientation tours and workshops; and other tools such as library publications, contests, brochures, direct mail, Web 2.0 applications and displays (Fisher and Pride, 2006; Mathews, 2009; Webreck Alman, 2007).

1. A good website helps to bring services and resources together in a unique way, because it is a direct link between the library and its specific users (for example students and academics) and the services it is seeking to promote. It also provides a channel for communication with target clients. Some media can be cross functional; for example, traditional tools, such as flyers, brochures and posters, can be used to promote events and programmes, which are promotional tools in themselves.

2. Newsletters can introduce new developments as well as highlight current services. Target audiences can be easily and effectively targeted through e-mail lists and the Internet. These services are cost effective, as they require little investment in resources and reach the intended client directly.

Six C’s of Digital Marketing Model
The Six C’s of digital marketing namely; content, choice, customization, community, cost reduction and convenience can be applied to library environment as follows(Figure 1):

i. **Content:** The academic library must acquire resources that are relevant to its patrons in order to attract students and other users to the library.

ii. **Choice:** The library should be able to provide variety of materials such as books and electronics resources for users to make their choice whenever they visit the library.

iii. **Customization:** Here the use of selective dissemination of information SDI could be applied in a bid to provide some professional information to some specific users which may not be useful to the general public.

iv. **Community:** Of course the community the library serves determines the kind of information it houses.

v. **Cost reduction:** Access to information should not attract high cost fees as this may be counterproductive.

vi. **Convenience:** The library must provide a conducive environment for research and learning

Digital marketing techniques

i. A variety of techniques have been used to promote library services and resources. Nkanga (2002, p. 309) found that promotional techniques such as personal contacts, circulars, memos, telephone calls, meetings, direct mailing, displays, talks, newsletters, library tours and leaflets were widely used (See Figure 2).

ii. The tools used for promotion were reviewed and the promotion activities of the studied department's information products were described by Cummings (1994). Many forms of techniques such as a combination of outreach programmes, holding lectures, changing library exhibits, library tours, classroom instruction, one-on-one appointments, library homepage, online catalogue and one-on-one training were suggested to promote library services and resources (Dodsworth, 1998, p. 321-332) (See Figure 2).
Statement of the problem
Libraries are generally considered as learning resource centres with arrays of books, journals, monographs, reference materials, Compact discs and other audio visual materials which enabled them to disseminate information to their various patrons. Making these products available for users who actually needed them has remained a huge challenge over the years. It is therefore important for librarians to devise various means of marketing their products and services so that many people can benefit from the immense services rendered by the university libraries. To this end, this study seeks to find solution to the challenge by delving into the world of digital information and communication technology, with a view to making these products available and assessable to patrons. Thus the study entitled: ‘Digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services among librarians in selected university libraries in South-South, Nigeria’ will not only bring awareness to more library users as regards the products and services offered by university libraries, but will also provide a platform for the libraries to increase its overall value in the society.

Objectives of the study
The main objective of this study is to examine the digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. Specifically, this study seeks to:
1. Determine the extent to which librarians in the university libraries carry out digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services.
2. Examine the benefits of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.
3. Investigate the challenges librarians encounter in the digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria.

Research questions
The following research questions were raised to guide the study:
1. To what extent do librarians in the university libraries carry out digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services?
2. What are the benefits of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?
3. What challenges do the librarians encounter in the digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

Review of related literature
In the view of Kumar (2014), marketing of information products and services is a concept of sensitively serving and satisfying the needs of all those who are involved in education, scholarship, research and development. Duke and Tucker (2007) added that the major reason for marketing in academic libraries is to fulfil the library’s mission, meet the needs of users, and attract new and current users, and highlight unique services and programmes as well as to increase the use of library service and products. Wu (2012) therefore stressed that marketing of library services is not all about telling the public what collection and services are being offered but contribute to building a relationship with library customers.

According to Singh (2009), marketing of library services is the process
of planning, pricing, promoting and distributing goods and services to create exchange that satisfy the library and the customers. From this definition, it can as well be deduced that mere provision of library resources in the library is not enough rather making them accessible and useable to the satisfaction of the users is paramount.

Academic libraries have many services and products that can be marketed. Each library needs to identify what service each user needs at a given time and how to market and satisfy the need. This is because marketing is not just about promoting new services and products but also bringing awareness to clients of existing services and products and determining their appropriateness (Sharma & Bhardwaj, 2009). Hence the need for academic librarians to market library services to users. Academic librarians have been charged with the description of document (indexing and abstracting), their content, features and purpose including the organization of such document. Indexing and abstracting is a means of such description to provide access to their identification and retrieval. Marketing indexing and abstracting services by academic libraries will enhance user’s awareness on how to locate materials in the subject area they need as well as providing summaries of the contents of reading materials in the library thereby serving as time-saver for library users.

Successful marketing includes the art of deciding that strategy/ technique used in different situation. As non-profit-making organizations, library and information centres cannot avoid marketing practices. Although libraries/information centres as non-profit organizations have three constituencies, e.g., clients to whom they provide services, the parent institution from whom they receive funds and donor agencies; but should engage in digital marketing of information products and services because of the numerous benefit associated with digital marketing.

Below are some of the benefits of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services according to Oyeniyi (2016):

- **Global reach**: With only a small investment, a library or information centre can market their products and services to the globe through a website or social media tools.
- **Greater engagement**: With digital marketing you can encourage your prospects, clients and followers to take action, visit your website, read about your products and services, rate them, buy them and provide feedback which is visible to your market.
- **Track able, measurable results**: Measuring a library’s online marketing with web analytics and other online metric tools makes it easier for a library to establish how effective their campaign has been. You can obtain detailed information about how customers use your website or respond to your advertising.
- **Personalisation**: If your customer database is linked to your website, then whenever someone visits the site, you can greet them with targeted offers. The more they buy from you, the more you can refine your customer profile and market effectively to them.
- **Openness**: by getting involved with social networking and managing it carefully, you can build customer loyalty and create a reputation for being easy to engage with.
- **Reduce cost**: Your business can develop its online marketing strategy for very little cost and can
potentially replace costly advertising channels such as Yellow Pages, television, radio and magazine.

- **Simple to measure**: You can see in real time what is or is not working for your business online and you can adapt very quickly to improve your results. For measuring traffic to your site you can use Google Analytics to measure specific goals you want to achieve for your website or blog and most packaged email marketing solutions provide good insight into how many people are opening, reading and converting from your emails.

Eze (2011), while looking at the marketing of library and information services, stated that the factors that characterized the difficulties in information marketing can be grouped into four categories which include lack of proper assessment of requirements, wants and needs of the users, casual approach in supplying information to the potential users, lack of perception of how much information services and products can contribute to boost research and development activity as well as lack of perception of the economic aspect of buying information on the part of the user of information. In the view of Ifijeh (2011) in a study on Nigerian university libraries stated that marketing library services are impeded by poor funding, poor infrastructure, low morale among librarians, lack of quality of library services and lack of business expertise by librarian. Thus librarians tend to focus on traditional duties of acquisition, cataloguing, classification and shelving and thereafter wait for patrons to come instead of reaching out to attract the users through professional marketing of services.

There are a number of literature written on the application of marketing to libraries but research into the influence on librarians’ attitude and awareness towards marketing is quite limited. Academic libraries have always seen themselves to be an integral part of the academic community that is why they often felt they do not have to justify their existence (Al-Bahrani, 2009). Today, the case is quite different because of the influence of information superhighway, dwindling library budget, increasing user need, complexity of information requirement, accountability, competition and outflow of information thereby forcing librarians to optimize the use of resources and services (Estall & Stephens, 2011).

**Methods**

The researcher collected from sixty-five (65) librarians who responded out of 100 copies of questionnaire administered to librarians in four purposively selected university libraries located in South-South Nigeria namely: Benson Idahosa University Library, John Haris Library, University of Benin, Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library and Rivers State University of Science and Technology Library. Among the respondents 23 were from the University of Benin Library, Fourteen (14) from Benson Idahosa University Library, 19 from Rivers State University of Science and Technology while 9 were from Federal University of Petroleum Resources Library (See Table 1 on libraries of the respondents). The descriptive research design was adopted in carrying out this research work. Data were gathered through the instrument of questionnaires, and the data were also analysed using frequency count percentages.

Table 2 shows that out of the 65 respondents, 20 respondents (31%) were males, while 45 respondents (69%) were females.

It can be seen in Table 3 that out of the 65 questionnaire collected, 3% which
Henry C. Otobrise and Abieyuwa Benita Omagbon: Digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services among librarians in selected university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

comprised of 2 respondents fell under the age bracket of 21-25 years, 3(5% ) were between the ages of 26-30yrs, while 11(17%) respondents) were between 31-35 years. 28(43%) 21(32%) 21 respondents were 36-40 years and 41 years and above respectively.

Table 4 shows that 35% (representing 23 of the respondents) are librarian II,23% of the respondents are Librarian I while 17% of the total respondents are senior Librarians. Also, 12% (representing 8 respondents) of the total respondents are principal librarian while 8% and 5% of the total respondents are deputy university librarian and university librarian respectively.

**Research question one:** To what extent do librarians in the university libraries carry out digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services?

The data in Table 5 are used to answer this research question.

Table 6 indicates that a majority of the librarians do not engage in digital marketing of library products and services as only 6% of them indicated that they carry out digital marketing to a very high extent while a staggering 40% and 43% of the total respondents indicated that they carry out digital marketing of library products and services in a low extent and very low extent respectively.

**Research question two:** What are the benefits of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

This research question is answered with the data in Table 6.

From Table 6, it is evident that digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services comes with numerous benefits. However, faster marketing attracted the highest percentage of 89.2% followed by wider/global communication (83.1%) and enhanced customised services (69.2%). The table shows that except easy to measure or evaluate (44.6%), all the other benefits attracted above 50% responses. This implies that engaging in digital marketing of products and services is valuable to university libraries.

**Research question three:** What challenges do librarians encounter in the digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in the university libraries in South-South, Nigeria?

The data in Table 7 are used to answered this research question.

Table 7 shows that 94.9% of the total respondents affirmed that the challenges of adopting digital marketing include incessant power (93.8%), low knowledge of the use digital technologies among librarians and library users (89.2%) but obsolescence of hardware and software technologies ranked lowest with 43.1%.
Henry C. Otobrise and Abieyuwa Benita Omagbon: Digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services among librarians in selected university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Source: Digital Marketing Expert. www.inficate.com,
Figure 1: Digital marketing model
Henry C. Otobrise and Abieyuwa Benita Omagbon: Digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services among librarians in selected university libraries in South-South, Nigeria

Table 1: Libraries of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Library</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benson Idaho University Library, Benin City</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Harris Library University of Benin, Benin City</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Effurun</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Sex of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Age of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-25yrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30yrs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35yrs</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40yrs</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41yrs and above</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Category of Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Librarian II</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian I</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Librarian</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Librarian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy University Librarian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Librarian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Extent to which the librarians carry out digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of digital marketing</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very High Extent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Extent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Extent</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Extent</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Benefits of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of digital marketing</th>
<th>SA Freq</th>
<th>SA %</th>
<th>A Freq</th>
<th>A %</th>
<th>D Freq</th>
<th>D %</th>
<th>SD Freq</th>
<th>SD %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wider/global communication</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low cost of marketing</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to measure or evaluate</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhances greater engagement with users</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhances customized services</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faster marketing</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Challenges of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges of digital marketing</th>
<th>SA Freq</th>
<th>SA %</th>
<th>A Freq</th>
<th>A %</th>
<th>D Freq</th>
<th>D %</th>
<th>SD Freq</th>
<th>SD %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low knowledge of the use of digital technologies among librarians and users</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cost of acquiring digital technologies</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardware and software obsolescence</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incessant power failure</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor network or internet connectivity/broadband</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It requires technical knowledge of internet technologies</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion
Research question one examines the extent to which librarians in academic libraries in South-South Nigeria carry out digital marketing of Library, information and knowledge products and services. From the result of the study, a mere 6% of the total respondents indicated that they carry out digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products to a very high extent while a staggering 40% and 43% of the total respondents indicated that they carry out digital marketing of library products and services in a low extent and very low extent respectively. This is in line WithEstell and Stephens (2011) whose study revealed that most librarians in university libraries do not engage in digital marketing of library products and services.

From research question two, it is evident that digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services in academic libraries comes with numerous benefits such as wider/ global communication, low cost of marketing when compared to traditional methods, enhances greater engagement with users as well as customized services. This findings supports Martney (2009) who noted that there are numerous benefits that accompany digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services such as cheaper communication in relation to the number of persons, wider communication etc.

Research question three showed that a majority of the respondents affirmed that the challenges of adopting digital marketing include low knowledge of the use digital technologies among librarians and library users, high cost of acquiring digital technologies, frequent obsolescence of computer hardware and software technologies, incessant power failure, poor network/ internet technologies etc. This finding corroborates the result of a study carried out by Wu (2012) which revealed that the challenges facing librarians towards digital marketing library and information services and products includes; insufficient tools for marketing, lack of systematic marketing and its relevance to education, insufficient employees to work on marketing and library’s poor attention to marketing.

From the result obtained from the study, it was revealed that the concept of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services is a very important concept in this digital era because of the numerous benefits libraries derive from the use of digital technologies in marketing. From the study, it was discovered that:

1. Digital marketing of library products and services is poorly carried out by librarians in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. In fact, majority of the librarians do not market their products and services digitally.

2. Digital marketing enhances wider/global communication between libraries, information centres and their users, it brings with it low cost of marketing when compared to traditional methods, enhances greater engagement with users, customized services as well as faster marketing of library products and services.

3. Just like traditional marketing, digital marketing comes with its own challenges such as high cost of acquiring digital technologies, frequent obsolescence of computer hardware and software technologies, incessant power failure, poor network/ internet technologies and it also requires sound technical know-how for effective usage.

Conclusion
Information is a vital resource for national
development. The increasing awareness and use of information as a result of digital marketing will no doubt improve the economy of any nation. The information age has resulted in the establishment of information systems and services which provide a variety of information services and products. Therefore, libraries in Nigeria must do well to embrace the digital age in all its entirety. This includes the use of digital and internet technologies in marketing (promoting) the indispensable products and services of libraries and information centres in this information age.

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are put forward in order to improve the use of digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services.

1. Librarians should embark more on digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services as the practice will bring more clients to the library as well as reach out to a wider range of library users.
2. Frantic effort should be made by the management of the libraries as well as authorities of the universities to overcome the identified weakness of lack of technical know-how on the use of internet technologies.
3. Regular and adequate training should be carried out on library staff and library users on the use of different internet/digital technologies.
4. An alternative and cheap source of power (such as solar) should be installed in libraries as a backup power in the event of power failure.
5. The government should compel network providers to provide standard and efficient services so that more internet marketing can be carried out even in other area of commerce, in order to improve the country’s economy.

References


Henry C. Otobrise and Abieyuwa Benita Omagbon: Digital marketing of library, information and knowledge products and services among librarians in selected university libraries in South-South, Nigeria


About the authors

Henry Confidence Otobrise is a seasoned librarian presently working at Benson Idahosa University Benin City. He is the Serials Librarian since 2015. He holds Diploma in Accounting from University of Benin and Bachelor of science in accounting from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma in 2008. He later proceeded to the prestigious University of Ibadan where he obtained Masters in Library and Information Science MLIS in 2014. His research interests is lie in use of library resources and information and communication technology. He is married with children. Email: hotobrise@gmail.com Phone: +2348038422497 or 07055174944.

Abieyuwa Benita Omagbon is a librarian with more than 10 ten years’ experience at John Harris Library, University of Benin. She attended Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma where she obtained her Bachelor in Library and Information Science in1999. She also holds Masters in Library an information Science from University of Ibadan (2014). She is currently a Principal Library Officer at the University of Benin. She specializes in cataloguing and classification, and married with children. Email: abiesula@yahoo.com, Cell: +2348023388617.