Internet as a tool for providing library services in Nigeria

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Abstract
The paper examined how Internet could be used in libraries to provide services in the 21st century Nigeria. To achieve this, the paper described how the Internet has changed concepts and theories of doing so many things, specifically, the paper examines library services that could be migrated and be offered through the Internet and argued that for librarians to attract users to libraries there is a need for them to embark on rigorous library instruction programmes to teach users how to find resources from the Internet. This could only happen if Information Professionals and Librarians on their part develop the skills and knowledge of using the Internet.

Keywords: Library services, Internet, search strategy, search engine, evaluating internet resources

Introduction
Advances in information and communications technology (ICT) continue to revolutionize how people communicate and relate with each other. It has also altered how people learn, work and carry out so many other human endeavours. Miller (2014) noted that “the Internet is widely perceived as one of the most transformative technological innovations of the twentieth century, not only remaking our information world... but, also shaping who we are with regard to our shared values and beliefs”. Among the top ten technologies that have profound impact in the world, Boutin (2013) put the Internet as the number one technology, which he described as the “world’s largest and most unruly library, it is also a global news channel, social club, research archive, shopping service, town hall, and multimedia kiosk. Add to that the most affordable mass medium ever and a curse to anyone with a secret to keep.”

Borbinha and Delgado (1996) pointed out that the advent of the Internet has altered how things are carried out. Citing as example, marketing, where instead of going to markets or supermarkets, you now shop online and whatever needed is delivered to the door steps. In communication, the Internet has provided many channels through which people interact with each other. Libraries are not spared from this onslaught and if the libraries are to remain relevant they must change their ways of providing their services by using the Internet technology. Discussing the rationale for libraries’ promotional activities, Chiparaush and Chigwada (2019) pointed out that in the library, promotional activities are “carried out to create awareness about certain products and services and ensuring the use of those services by library users to meet their information needs.”

As part of the Internet’s onslaught, many library resources and services are now offered online. Many books, journals and magazine are now produced in electronic formats and could be accessed online. Those that have been produced in paper form, efforts are being made to convert them to electronic form. With regard to the services, today there are libraries that have seized the opportunities provided by the ICT and are now offering their services to the international community. Many libraries have introduced services that use various
communication devices that allow their resources to be accessed globally. In addition, many libraries are now taking the advantages offered by the technologies to communicate directly with their users. ‘Ask Librarian’ is a phone-in programme targeted at those that have information related problems but are unable to visit the library, for lack of time or tight schedule that do not allow them to come to the libraries. Furthermore, the Internet allows libraries to communicate with their users through e-mail and other social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.

In Nigeria, libraries must find ways to adopt the Internet technology to provide their services. But for them to use the Internet to offer their services they must know, which and which services can be migrated and provided through the Internet. Matthews (2011) stated that the absolute total purpose of the 21st century library model is the customer. Customer centred library service is the service that meet the information needs of the 21st century library users. Libraries that offer 21st century services will remain relevant to their community. As we are already in the 21st century, libraries in Nigeria must come to terms with the realities and modernize the services offered to their customers, else they continue to lose their customers.

The methodology used for this paper is purely literature based which includes the use of current knowledge including report of substantive findings and reviews of other studies, as well as theoretical and methodological contribution to topics related to the subject matter. In general, the author relied heavily on the secondary sources of data collection based on the existing and current literature available in textbooks, journals, reports and internet resources. There are a number of guidelines for using literature review methodology. However, the present paper adopted the use of systematic and integrated review as proposed by Whittemore and Knafl (2005).

The paper is organised under the following subheadings: concept of library services; concept of the internet; internet as a tool for promoting library services; uses of internet in libraries; search strategy and search technique as well as evaluating Internet resources.

**Concept of library services**
Library services are activities, programmes and resources provided by libraries to support the use of their collections. Chiparausha and Chigwada (2019) define library services as “resources and activities provided by libraries to address information needs of users.” The authors broadly categorised services offered by libraries into five distinct categories. These services include circulation services, reference services, and online information services, inter library loans, and information literacy skills training. However, Edom (2012) listed the following fifteen different types of services offered by libraries:

i. User education
ii. Library orientation
iii. Lending services
iv. Reference services
v. Advisory services
vi. Book reservation services
vii. Referral Services
viii. Interlibrary loan services
ix. Reprographic services
x. Current awareness services
xi. Selective dissemination of information (SDI) service
xii. Extension services
xiii. Consultancy services
xiv. Book display
xv. Internet Services

**Concept of the Internet**
Internet is a network of networks. A network is defined as two or more devices connected via a communication device in
order to “see”, “feel” and “talk” to each other. The Internet is built on the principle of one computer or device connected to another computer or device in an endless circle. In short the Internet is designed to connect millions of computers, from one organisation to another organisation and from one country to another country, making it possible to communicate and share information on a global scale. According to Internet World Stat (2019), the Internet has consolidated itself in to a very powerful platform that has changed, forever, the way we do business and the way we communicate. It has also become the universal source for communications and for sharing of information to millions of people, at home, school and at work. Additionally, the Internet World Stats (2022) put the total Internet users, as at 30th June 2022, to be about 5, 385,798,406. This represents more than 67.9% of the world population of 7,932,791,734.

Today the Internet has become a house hold name in both developed and developing countries. People, organisations and institutions are using it to publish and to find every type of information they may require to satisfy their information needs. As an information dispenser, the Internet contains billions of information resources on different subjects, formats and scattered on different types of computers and communication devices across the globe. However, these resources unlike libraries are not organised in any way.

Internet as a tool for providing library services

Internet has become an integral part of libraries by helping them to meet the objectives for setting them up. Discussing the benefits of Internet to users of libraries and Information centres, Onohwakpor and Adogbeji (2011) noted that the Internet offers many benefits to the library users such as providing equal opportunity for access by all users; availability of the information for any number of users at any time of the day; exchange of electronic mail; Online real time interaction with other network users; participation in electronic media mailing lists and conferences; Receipt and delivery of electronic publication. They concluded that these were the benefits that make the Internet veritable tool for libraries to use in order to provide services to their patrons. Also, Sahoo and Sharma, (2015) asserted that the Internet has become an integral part of the library by helping the library to provide information to the users in a timely manner. Its use has enabled easy access to many resources that would have been impossible to access prior to the advent of the Internet. In addition, the Internet has improved information sharing significantly. The Internet has also made it possible for librarians to eliminate completely the challenges imposed by time and geographical constraints.

But, the simplicity and ease of access to information resources among the users is not without problems to libraries, especially academic libraries. That simplicity has made library patrons not to come to libraries anymore. Patrons prefer to browse the Internet for any information they may wish to consult. According to IFLA (2016), children and young adults no longer want to visit the library physically; rather they want to get things on their fingertips by clicking on their devices. To address the challenge, IFLA suggests libraries going to wherever the users may be. This is possible with the help of ICT libraries can reach their patrons more easily. Libraries can create web pages to provide the users with “one stopInfo” shop, where links to information about most of what was discussed under the services offered by libraries could be provided. In other words, to overcome the challenges of users not coming to the libraries, the libraries can take advantage of the Internet and other communication devices to advertise their services and
operations through the websites they created, thereby making the Internet to be integral part of the library’s infrastructure, as proposed by Sahoo and Sharma, (2015). Rao and Babu (2001) discussed the new roles expected from librarians of the information age. They posited that librarians could act as intermediaries, as facilitators, end-user trainers, site builders, or publisher research interface designers, knowledge managers and sifter of information resources.

**Uses of Internet in libraries**

In this section, the paper discussed how the Internet could be used by libraries as a tool to provide their services. For ease of discussion, on how the Internet can be used in the libraries, the paper grouped the library operations into three broad headings, which reflects how the libraries are organised for ease of administration and work flow. These broad headings are: library administration; readers’ services division and technical services department. The paper then explains how the Internet could be used in each of these departments.

**Library administration**

This is the section that deals with the day-to-day administration of the library; the section implements the policy issues, budgeting, and staff recruitment of the library. As the chief executive of the library, the schedule of the chief executive requires him to be conversant with the use of e-mail and other social media platforms for speedy response to issues.

**Readers’ services division**

This division establishes direct contact with library users. It takes custody of materials that have been processed in the Technical Services Division and makes them available to users in an organized and controlled manner. Furthermore the section is directly concerned with assisting readers to secure information and to use the resources of the library for study and research purposes. Readers Service division according to Edom (2012) is made up of four sections namely: circulation, reserved book section, reference section and branch libraries.

1. **Circulation section:** The circulation section of the library deals directly with the users. It is a section where resources that can be borrowed are kept. It is also the section where users of the library are registered to enable them to become bona fide users of the library. As the section that deals directly with the users, the section is charged with the responsibilities of shelving shelf reading, compilation of statistics, registration of new users, charging and discharging of loans, writing overdue notices, educating library users, issuance of reference letters and book displays. In this section the computers can specifically be used to compile the statistics, registration of new users, charging and discharging of books, writing and sending overdue notices and above all assist the library to publish rules and regulations guiding the use of the library as well as educate the users about some of its services. INFLIBNET (2004) highlighted the impact of the Internet on circulation sections of libraries to include remote login, status check, access to OPAC, sending reminders to users and interlibrary loans. Today as a result of development in software and hardware, self-serving circulation system has evolved; the self service enables the user to borrow the resource without the presence of the designated library staff. For borrowing, the user has to be in the library but for renewal he can renew the resource remotely, provided that no other user showed interest to borrow it.
ii. **Reserved book section.** Reserve book section is a section in a library that housed books and other informational resources that because of their importance must remain in the library building. A book placed on reserve may serve as the main textbook of a core course registered by many students, allowing it to be borrowed will deprive many students from having access to it; therefore the course Lecturer requests its placement on reserve, so that access to it is controlled and regulated by the library. Normally, a reserve book can only be used for one or two hours (depending on the policy of the library) and can be renewed if no one requested for it. The borrower may be fined if he defaulted in returning the book at the expiration of his time.

iii. **Reference section:** Resources in this section are for consultation only. The section also handles user’s queries. Other functions of the section include interlibrary loan services, user education, referral notes and advice to library users. Of all the sections of the library, reference section is the most affected by the Internet technology. This is because most of the resources housed in this section have electronic counter-parts, and can be accessed online through the Internet. So even if a library doesn’t have a resource it can connect the user to another library where that resource is available. Examples of these types of resources include encyclopaedias, dictionaries, almanacs and many other reference sources. For Inter library loan, the librarian can browse through the online catalogue of cooperating libraries to determine the availability of a resource and then request for a scanned copy of the relevant or the entire pages.

iv. **Branch Library** This is a library that forms part of a library system but are not located within the same building, area or city. For example in Nigeria many State libraries

On user education, the Internet can be used to provide this service better by writing out and publishing handouts that teaches the users how to use a particular service, for example how to borrow a book or how to access a particular e-resource. Almost all university libraries in developed countries provide this type of information on their web pages (Gwarzo, 2014). The libraries not only have this information on their web pages but a user can also interactively chat with the librarians, he can ask any question he wants regarding any of the services offered by the library (UMD Libraries, 2020). Webb (2007) explored the use of YouTube in library instruction. He noted that YouTube is a video sharing Network, which the library can use to film its various services and upload them to its website, where thousands of its users could access and download them simultaneously.

In some universities, the reference sections are saddled with the responsibilities of providing orientation programmes to newly admitted students. Edom, (2012) defined Library orientation as the quick guided tour of the library with the aim of showing the students the locations of the library, information resources and facilities that exist in the library. The Internet could be used to explain all these information, in addition, videos and still pictures could be provided on the library’s web site.
have branches in remote areas of the states. Administratively, these branches are controlled by the main state libraries in terms of providing information resources as well as on staffing.

Today, the Internet has become a household name in terms of searching and finding information. Libraries and Librarians have a great role to play in teaching their users how to find and make ethical use of the Internet resources. Librarians’ role as gate keepers to library resources have transformed into one that assist the user find relevant resources that addressed his information needs. The fact that the users no longer come to the libraries, but relied on the Internet to obtain all the information they required makes it mandatory for librarians to spearhead the training of the users on how to effectively search and retrieve good resources acceptable to the academic community. This means that Librarians must spearhead the teaching of search strategies and search engines as a prelude to finding academic resources. The librarians must also teach users how to evaluate before accepting any Internet resource they want to use.

As educators, librarians and information professionals have a duty to teach users how to find good and relevant resources not only in the local collection of the library but the Internet as well. Robert and Blandy (1989) asserted that the information we continuously see and encounter on the Internet easily is not important and reliable. Good and reliable information is hidden and the user must know how to find it. This means that the information one gets easily from the Internet is not the best information. For the user to find good and reliable information he must develop the skills needed to retrieve it from where it is stored. Teaching the users the skills to retrieve information buried anywhere in the globe is the specialty of librarians.

Also, librarians should spear head the teaching of ethical use of someone’s idea, to avoid been accused of plagiarism. In a study, conducted in United Kingdom, plagiarism is found to be on the increase. Tobin and Granger (2009), in their study showed that plagiarism was rising among international students. Specifically, the study indicted Nigerian and Indian students. In the Nigerian case, the problem could be attributed to the non-inclusion of practicing and seasoned librarians among the staff teaching ‘Use of Library’ course to undergraduate students in Nigerian universities.

**Technical services division**

The main function of technical services in libraries is the acquisition, organization (bibliographic control), physical processing, and maintenance of library collections. Technical processing is performed "behind the scenes," usually in a technical services department. The division comprised of the acquisition section, cataloguing and classification sections, serial section, bindery/reprographic units. According to LISBDNETWORK (2021) the Internet provides access to publisher’s catalogues and OPACs of large libraries. OPACs have become a popular source of bibliography and cataloguing information. Libraries could scan these catalogues and download bibliographic data, thereby assisting the preparation of new books the day they arrived into the library. Internet also offers access to Dewey summaries for classification.
i. **Acquisition section:** This section is responsible for acquiring both print and non-print resources of the library. The section deals directly with the publishers, vendors or jobbers. Large number of selection tools like Book in Print, Booksellers Catalogues etc. are now available online from the Internet. These sources help in the selection of right and latest books for libraries. Internet has made the whole acquisition process much faster, cheaper and easier for libraries. The most important function of the acquisition librarians is communication (when placing orders, acknowledgement of receipt, order cancellation, order claims, payments and etc) with the suppliers of library resources, such as Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, IBS Bookshop Co., UK, D.K. Agencies are the most popular and largest online bookshop (LISBDNETWORK 2021). The acquisition librarian will not only be communicating with his suppliers but also other organisations that make book donation to the library. Recent advances in communication have shortened the time it takes to communicate with the suppliers. Instead of weeks or month of normal mail, the time has been shortened to few seconds or minutes through the use e-mail services. The procedure for the selection of the resources has also been simplified by providing the selection tools online. In addition, it has also made it possible for libraries to make payments of what they acquired instantly.

It should be noted that nowadays the bibliographical records of the library resources to be acquired are generated only once in the acquisition section. This arrangement eliminates errors in subsequent generation of the same bibliographical data in other sections of the library, such as cataloguing and circulation sections. Library automation software ensures that the data is generated only at the ordering stage. When the resource arrives in the library, other sections can have access to the same data generated at the acquisition section.

ii. **Cataloguing and classification section:** This is the section that processes resources acquired by the acquisition section. It is the section that prepares the catalogue entries for sending to the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), which can be accessed online either on the Internet or intranet. To generate the catalogue entries, the Cataloguer may use the Internet to import MARC records from OPACs of other libraries. The section also compiles list of new arrivals, which could be published in book form for distribution to patrons or sending the softcopy to the patrons as a form of information service either as a Current Awareness Service or selectively to individuals (SDI) that requested for the purchase of the resource/s, such as departments or individual lecturers. LISBDNETWORK (2021) also noted that some libraries maintain a user profiles. They used the information on the user profile to scan for relevant databases, websites and journal articles, which suite the profiles of their users and communicate the information through the email. In all these services the Acquisition librarian or the Cataloguing librarian relied on the Internet for communication.
iii. **Serials section:** This section handles all resources published periodically, either at regular or irregular intervals. Just like the acquisition librarian, the Serials Librarian handles all correspondences pertaining to periodical subscriptions. That is why it is sometimes described as a library within a library. The section indexes and prepares the records of what have been received as well as outstanding issues yet to be collected. It sends the information to the OPAC so that whenever a user is searching for information in the OPAC both books and journal will be searched and retrieved simultaneously.

iv. **Bindery/reprographic unit:** Some libraries have a bindery unit that assists in the preservation of library resources. The unit performs an in-house treatment of mutilated, damaged and worn out resources to ensure the longevity of library resources. **Reprographic service unit** – is a section in a library that is charged with the responsibilities of making copies of library resources available to users within the ambit of copyright laws. The word “reprography is an umbrella term comprising methods of reproducing contents. Some of the most common methods include digital and offset printing, scanning, photography and xerography (DMSGroup 2023). According to Udochukwu (2019) reprographic encompass such services that aim at making printed materials more easily available through xerographic printing, which involves a photographic process that is completely dry, using no solutions or fumes, and permanent copies can be produced from the original document within a few minutes.

**Search strategy**

Librarians who are supposed to teach their users how to use the Internet must have the skills and the competence to find relevant resources on the internet. In other words, the librarians must know how to develop a search strategy, how to use a search engine and how to correctly cite the sources used in their writings, before they can be entrusted to teach their patrons. Developing a search strategy before embarking on a search is a very important step for retrieving effective and relevant resources. Bachchhav (2016) sees search strategy as “the conceptual analysis of the request translated into language of the system”. According to Gwarzo (2020) search strategy is simply a plan for finding information needed by the users. Therefore, planning to conduct a search for resources on the Internet is very important. The planning will ensure the retrieval of exact resources that address the information needs of the searcher, it also ensures that the searcher remain focused on what he is searching. In simple language, it is the breaking down of the topic of the search into concepts that will likely match the keywords used by search engines.

The more thought and care a user puts during this plan, the more productive and more useful will be his search results. From the beginning, the user must be able to:

i. Formulate the topic of his research and its scope
ii. Identify important concepts within the topic
iii. Identify search terms to describe those concepts
iv. Consider synonyms and variation of those terms
v. Prepare your search logic
i. **Formulation of research topic and its scope:** Understanding the topic is the first step in conducting fruitful search. User must determine the extent, depth and the scope of the topic he wishes to find on the Internet. Johnson and Lamb (2007) proposed the creation of concept map or visual planning guide. The plan should “include the central topic or problem, a word list and a set of required information”. It is pertinent to determine what type of information is required (ie. ideas, facts, opinions, options) what form of presentation is preferred (text, graphics, charts)? The user can write different sentences about what he is researching on in order to have a firm grip on the topic. The user can write down any idea he has regarding the topic, even those harebrained. Poor determination of the topic will only result in retrieving documents that may not address the information needs. The user should bear in mind that all information retrieval systems are simply designed to supply and deliver the information not exactly as he wanted it but close enough to enable him decide based on what he has specified in his search terms.

ii. **Identification of important concepts within the topic:** From the word list generated the user should identify the key words that make up the topic of his research, if possible he should identify the dependent and independent variables of the topic.

iii. **Identify the search terms that describe those concepts:** The user should look at the list of his keywords to determine the synonyms of the words he intends to use; words that have the same meaning with his keywords and also determine words that have alternative spelling, abbreviations and acronyms for the words on the list. The user should also identify words that have broader or narrower meanings to his original terms. This information is very important because as he starts the search he may likely use the words to refine (expand or contract) search terms. For instance, in the event he conducts a search and few hits are retrieved he can easily use the synonym words to expand the search.

It should be emphasized that when conducting a research in an unfamiliar area, using a directory is better than using a search engine. Apart from giving you the latest happening or current information on your subject, the directory also enables you to have a general idea about the topic you have chosen. It also assists you to find relevant references to your topic as well as list of important resources that have been written by experts in that area. The knowledge of when to use a search engine or a search directory is therefore very important.

iv. **Consider synonyms and variation of those terms:** Synonyms are words that have the same meaning with the concept or words used in a
search string. Authors are at liberty to use whichever word to express themselves. By determining the synonyms you are trying to determine what other might call the concept you are investigating, and therefore improving your chances of covering comprehensively the concept been sought. For example, the concept “hypertension” other authors might refer to it as “blood pressure” or the concept “search” which others may refer to as “seek, look, hunt or quest” (U of T. Libraries 2023). Variation on the other hand has to do with the differences in spelling between the American and British English. For example, Catalog and Catalogue, Center and Centre, Leukemia and Leukaemia. In some of these instances the use of wild cards can take care of the variation in the spelling (U of T. Libraries 2023).

v. Prepare your search logic: search logic or search techniques is a procedure for forcing the search engine to retrieve only resources that matched a specified criteria (Rashid 2020). Arora, (2020) explains that search techniques are ways of using search terms to find required information. There are many ways to force the search engine to retrieve only what are specified in the search query. The most common search techniques and principles that are applicable to various searching tools include the use of Boolean Operators, Phrase searching and truncation, Parenthesis, Wildcards, Field searching, and Proximity searching (Arora, 2020).

i. Boolean operators: The boolean operators are “AND, OR, NOT”. And is used to limit the search to the presence of two words in the search, for example Biology AND Education. Or is used when you have a term that has variation in its spelling, (e.g catalog and catalogue;center and centre) or when you have words that mean the same thing, such as admit that has the following synonym words “acknowledge/recognise/concede/confess”. So in this case the use of “or” will expand the search. By finding the word admit or any of the other words acknowledge/recognise/concede/confess. Not, on the otherhand, is used to negate or cancel or suppress the retrieval of other word not important to the Internet searcher. For example Jaguar NOT Automobile or Catapillar NOT Insect. University library NOT College library etc.

Some search engines use arithmetic symbols of plus (+) to add words to a search term and minus (-) to exclude words from the search term. For example Biology + Education. Or Jaguar – Car –Automobile. In the first,+ it will only retrieve documents that contain the two words, just like the use of “AND”. In the second,- the search engine will retrieve only documents about the animal Jaguar and not the car jaguar.

ii. Use of quotes to locate a specific phrase: Using specific phrase is the simplest way of narrowing and saving ones precious time. By putting quotes around the most important phrases one is forcing the search engine to recognise the importance of the concept and to
fish out only documents in which the two or more words appear side by side. According to Collins (2018) when you use quotation marks around a phrase you are telling the search engine to bring back pages that include these search terms exactly how they appeared. Norton (2011) noted that using quotation marks become handy especially if you are trying to retrieve document in which you remember only part of the phrase you have seen on a web page or part of a quotation.

iii. Use of truncation search is also known as wildcards, stemming, term masking etc is the use of asterisks to replace some letters in a word or sentence. For example Lib*, when used in searching will retrieve library, libraries, librarian/s etc.

iv. Field search: All web documents are presented by attributes such as Author, Title, Publication date and Document type attributes, which can be used to retrieve only the type of document/s specified in the search terms. People use different types of application software to create their documents. Most of these application programmes automatically add an extension to the name of the document to indicate the type. For example, doc, pdf, rtf, html etc. using this information a user can ask the search engine to return only specified document type. For example, Use of “Search Engines” by “Undergraduate Students” of “Federal Universities in Nigeria” “pdf” This will retrieve only pdf documents and exclude any other document not pdf.

v. Proximity search: Proximity search allows users to specify whether two search terms should occur adjacent to each other; And also whether one or more words occur in between the search terms. Whether the search terms should occur in some paragraph irrespective of the intervening words. Bachchhav (2016) noted that “proximity search is as good as AND. It searches for the occurrence of two or more search terms but it specifies the distance between the search terms.” For example- Sun within four words after moon.

Evaluating Internet resources
As indicated earlier, the Internet is the largest store of information resources. Some of these resources can be described as good, some can be described as bad and yet others as ugly. The central aim of the evaluation is to retrieve the good resources, rather than the last two, bad and ugly. Hence the need for users to evaluate whatever resource they found on the Internet before its acceptance and use in academic writings.

Benedictine University (2020) developed criteria for evaluating web or Internet resources, using five (5) distinct criteria for the evaluation, namely: currency, relevance, authority, accuracy and purpose, collectively given the acronym CRAAP. Each of these criteria is made up of series of questions when answered will guide the user to accept or reject information found on the Internet.

Currency: the timeliness of the information
- When was the information published or posted?
- Has the information been revised or updated?
- Is the information current or out-of-date for your topic?
- Are the links functional?
Relevance: the importance of the information for your needs
- Does the information relate to your topic or answer your question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too elementary or advanced for your needs)?
- Have you looked at a variety of sources before determining this is one you will use?
- Would you be comfortable using this source for a research paper?

Authority: the source of the information
- Who is the author/publisher/source/sponsor?
- Are the author's credentials or organizational affiliations given?
- What are the author's qualifications to write on the topic?
- Is there contact information, such as a publisher or e-mail address?
- Does the URL reveal anything about the author or source?
  - examples: .com (commercial), .edu (educational), .gov (U.S. government) .org (non-profit organization), or .net (network)

Accuracy: the reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the content
- Where does the information come from?
- Is the information supported by evidence?
- Has the information been reviewed or refereed?
- Can you verify any of the information in another source or from personal knowledge?
- Does the language or tone seem biased and free of emotion?
- Are there spelling, grammar, or other typographical errors?

Purpose: the reason the information exists
- What is the purpose of the information? To inform? Teach? Sell? Entertain? Persuade?
- Do the authors/sponsors make their intentions or purpose clear?
- Is the information fact? Opinion? Propaganda?
- Does the point of view appear objective and impartial?
- Are there political, ideological, cultural, religious, institutional or personal biases?

Conclusion
The Internet has continued to shape our lives and what we do for a living. The earlier libraries and librarians realised this, the better for them to be prepared in meeting the 21st century expectations of their users. As specialists in handling information, librarians should not continue to fold their arms and allow other organisations take over their roles. There is no better profession to handle information generation, acquisition, guidance on the retrieval and use of information in whatever form than librarians. As information professionals, the services that should be provided to the users must include the skills and the competence of not only searching, finding and retrieving information but also teaching the ethical use of that information as well.

Based on the foregoing, the paper wishes to make the following recommendations:
1. Library schools should introduce a course on creating and maintaining websites. If the Nigerian libraries are to provide 21st century services, then they will require the services of library staff that are knowledgeable on library services as well as web page creation and design.
2. The Nigerian Library Associations (at the national and state levels) should continue to organise seminars and workshops to sensitise librarians on the need to develop Internet skills and competencies to assist their 21st century users with any type of information problem.

3. There is a need for all libraries in Nigeria to create and continue to maintain web pages, which will contain information about the services they offer.

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