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INFORMATION BUSINESS IN NIGERIA: PROSPECTS FOR LIBRARIANS

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts a justification of the importance of information Business in the present world Librarianship. Attempts were also made to conceptualize information marketing place. The paper also discussed the challenges and opportunities of the these trends for the library professionals or librarians emphasis was equally laid on fee-based information services. The paper was concluded by reconcientising information professionals on the need to diversify their career opportunities and an any of information services was equally discussed. The prospects for librarians in the light of global information business were also touched.

INTRODUCTION

(Soola, 1998) communication plays a central role in human relationships. Without it, there cannot be any meaningful human interaction. All our waking, and indeed, some of our sleeping moments, are communication takes place everywhere we think, or are in contact, physical or otherwise, with other people.

Communication is today widely acknowledge as a critical resource input in business, organizational activities and interactions. Today, there are many information that new librarians can take, but to make progress they need fetus, flexibility and interests that range far beyond library walls, librarians take different directions nowadays. A study in progress by the presenters, illustrate this with experiences of four new librarians: a librarian in a business information centre, a law librarian, and a producer at Electric library, an on-line research service product, librarians are of tenable to take long term view of their profession and as a result they underestimate their own value and see change as a threat (Blair, 2002) in his abstract to a paper titled, "Behead the Square Career planning for information professional in the new millennium" wrote thus:

Employment is changing. Many organization are downsizing. The nation of all life long career in one profession is seriously challenged.

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Employability now means an awareness of the changing world of work, responsibility for your own career and personal development perhaps in areas not previously considered. Information professionals are in privilege position to have maximum flexibility in their careers.

Other people have looked at the prospects which are for librarians and other information professionals. Pantry (Pantry, 2000) looks at the challenges, opportunities and problems presented by rapid changes in technology and at the current situation of information professions.

Librarians are academic, they can put their research skills to good use, and earn more respect and pay. Information business is taking on a new allure. A few worth opportunities for both new, old and, retired librarians* will be discussed hereafter.

Basic Concepts

Library, information and documentation services have always been taken for granted as social services institutions. This fact, acknowledge, however many people the world ever awaited the year 2000 with a lot of trepidation and new strategies are with use. Information communication and consolidators.

Information is an extremely valuable resource. An individual who has current, useful information has power. This helps to justify the huge investments in research and development (R & D) in the area of information generation, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination, particularly in advanced economics. Information may thus be jealously guarded, hoarded, shared freely, or sold, depending upon the motive of the possessor.

Information is man's cumulative knowledge in all forms and from all sources that could help its user arrive at rational decisions, it is data of value in planning, decision making and evaluation of any programs. Information can be obtained by receiving, by leaning about certain ideas and also by giving instruction e.g on how to operate a machine.

containing The modern world of business is a challenging and competitive world of survival of the fittest. Success in the business world, to a large extent, depends on the speed and efficiency of business communication.

Business is concerned with employment, occupation and profession which serves as a mean of earning a living and that can occupy one's time, attention and labour of men for the purpose of profit.

Information business is therefore concerned with the idea of giving information people with aim of receiving money for the derives rendered in return, information business is fee-based. Wermel (Wermel 1999) outlined the fundamentals of the provision of fee-based information services and examined the factors affecting their success including their costs and quality, market forces, staff, marketing and client relations. Fee-based information services therefore, is the business of buying and selling information, tangible or otherwise, as a commodity.

In Nigeria today, fee-based information centres operate different services such a Computer, Internet fax, E-mail, Photocopy, Telephone, Publishing, Bookseller, Consultancy and Broadcasting services. All these information business centres are set up in order to make profits. Fee based' means carrying monetary value, hence fee-

based information services is the monetary value benefit acquired by an organization or individual through the marketing of information.

Information Technology (IT) provides near limitless possibilities of increasing the quantity, and enhancing the quality, speed and availability of information in a complex but increasingly interdependent world of business today's business world is becoming irreversibly technologies simply put, information technology is the application of technology to information management.

The new information technology is beginning to help us to modify, or completely alter, our concept of the world around us in general and the business environment in particular. Time was, when success in business was conditioned by efficiency in the management of resources-human and material. Today, no modern business can afford to ignore information resource without imperiling its survival. Similarly, the new technology is helping to broaden the base of decision-making in organizations, as information becomes more readily accessible to superiors and subordinates alike. This empowerment not only increases employee independence and responsibility, but also encourages and enriches subordinate superior communication interactions.

The Role of Business Centre or Library and Information Centre

Their level of technological development notwithstanding, developing economies are beginning to take advantage of the enormous possibilities of information technology. This they do by investing in both its software and Hardware facilities to meet the needs of commerce, industry, banking, insurance, publishing public records, marketing, advertising, medicine, education, library, and so on. Information centre or business centers have become a booming business in the towns and cities. Photocopiers, electric typewriters, word processor, desktop, publishing facilities are available to serve the varying needs of the ever-increasing number of users. Computer programming data analysis and consultancy interm of reference service, bibliographical survey, photocopy, inter library cooperation, newspapers cutting, current awareness service selective disseminate of information service etc. are some of the other services being offered by these business centres or information centres

Information Brokerage

Brokerage activities generally are found in markets made up of many small. Widely dispersed buyers and sellers. Information broker in our context here, is one who acts as an intermediary between two other parties in the purchase-sales transaction of information. Economical, his function is to bring buyers and sellers of information together with the aim of getting commission. Cai (Cai 1997) summarized together of fee-based service in libraries and compared the role of reference librarians with that of information brokers. An-analysis of the market for information service shows that librarians remain the major information brokers. Information brokering as a business opportunity for the individual information professional began in France in 1935.

Prospects For Librarians

Some known fee-based information services that could be rendered by librarians include: Compilation of bibliographies, abstracts and indexes, provision of clipping services, literature searching, information and documents delivery. In addition

to the traditional careers, there are prospects for librarians in some other avenues that are profit oriented. Such relevant ventures include: Audio and video cassettes business, cinema business, publishing, biography, indexing and abstraction services. Clair (Clair 2000) in his paper titled, "Qualification management in information services: my grand design", stated that information work is not just librarianship but anything to do with the management and delivery of information. For an example, publishing includes the printing and selling of periodicals, newspapers, newsletters and law reports. Librarians who establish bookshops are on the right paths and so also reviewers and editors in the trade publishing and printers and binders in the book industry.

Essential Consideration For Establishing Small Scale Business In Information Centres

Having given prospects that librarians may derive from establishing information business outfit, there is a need to consider the essential factors necessary for establishing small scale business. Such considerations include fund, site, equipment, security, market, accessibility infrastructure facilities such as Power Holding Company (PHC) or (NEPA), NITEL, Staff, accommodation and personal experience. Business experts have always been laying emphasis on the fact that prospective business man or woman should go into business in which he or she has some knowledge. So any librarian who cares to go into any business as earlier enumerated here is on the right adventure. Information guides or signboards and effective advertisements can be enhance business outlooks for more sales. In summary, the views discussed above indicate that there are prospects for information professionals, the Librarian inclusive in the information business as seen in the fee-based information services comprising various information outlets as earlier mentioned in this paper. Corporate organizations also use information centres. So information as a source of intelligence services, developed countries and information need is best viewed as a generic term encompassing information demand. (Cover 1969) stated that a determination of the information needs of users was absolutely to the management of an information centre. Any information centre is in the business of providing services where the citizen can secure reliable information advice on various matters there by acting as a 'cleaning house'. One important problem I would like to mention before I close this paper is legal implication i.e principle of fair use. In recent years, according to Hannabuss (Harnnabuss 2000) increasing attention appears to have been paid by information professionals to issues of professional negligence and liability. He discussed key legal issues and suggested that the commercialization of the information market place was encouraging information professionals to look to a mixture of law, ethics and self intents.

Finally I would like to end with an abstract to a paper by May (May, 1998) which gave a vivid illustration of a serving librarian experience.

Recounts the experience of a director of public libraries in the United State of America who took a year off from work explain her motivation to do so, the feeling of being stuck in her job and unable to make progress, how the break was organized, what she did at an information centre during the break an its beneficial effects. This abstract is in line with the opening sentence of this paper which ends with beyond library walls. Lastly, we say of ourselves that library services are information business and information business relishes the profession. We love our profession. For us information work anywhere is the

first, second and last job.

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