

CURRENT TRENDS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE:

Essays in honour of Late O. K. Odusanya



Edited by:

Oyesiku, F. A. (Mrs)

Akinbode, R. O.

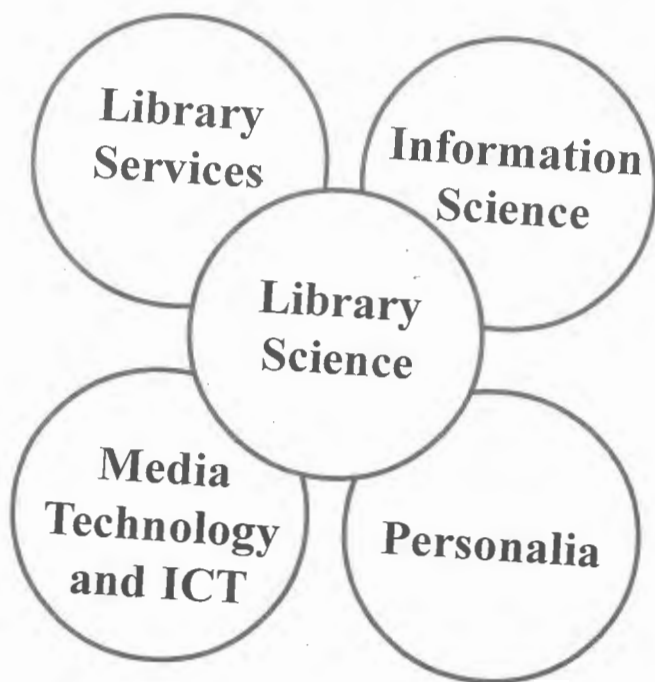
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The Editors: Oyesiku, F. A. (Mrs.), Akinbode, R. O., Amusa, O. I.
and Odunewu, A. O.

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PREFACE

Library and information science is a profession that has been playing significant roles in educational, social, political and economic development of human beings from the time immemorial. By extension, librarians and other information professionals have impacted and are still imparting knowledge that are beneficial to human beings. Mr. O. K. Odusanya FNLA was a distinguished librarian who during his life time affected the lives of many Nigerians. He worked tirelessly as an academic librarian, a scholar, and library administrator.

A collected essays on current trends in library and information science is not too much as honour for an individual of Odusanya's calibre. This publication is a compendium of current and emerging issues in the field of library and information science written by librarians and distinguished academics. The essays published in the book cover wide areas of library and information science, and grouping of the essays under various subjects facilitate references and ease of consultation by the readers.

This book cannot pretend to be perfect, but it is comprehensive and has contributed to knowledge in the field of library and information science. Consequently, I have no reservation in recommending the book to all and sundry in library and information practice.

F. A. Oyesiku (Mrs.)

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INTRODUCTION

Current trends in Library and Information Science is published to immortalize an individual who made remarkable contributions to the discipline, and profession of librarianship. This distinguished personality is Mr. Oluwasegun Kolawole Odusanya, FNLA, CLN, late University Librarian of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria. He left this world on November 27th, 2007, after he had diligently contributed his own quota to the development of humanity through his chosen profession, Library and Information Science.

During his life time, Mr. Odusanya was a colossus in the profession at the state and national level. He at different times held different positions in the executive committees of Nigerian Library Association (NLA) at State level, National level, and in the Committee of University Librarian of Nigerian Universities (CULNU). He was also a prominent member of Librarian Registration Council of Nigeria until his death. One area that Mr. Odusanya made remarkable impact in the profession is Cataloguing, Classification and Indexing of Information Sources. This is an area that many librarians have reservation for. He was a super active member of the Cataloguing Classification and Indexing Section of NLA. He served for several years on the executive committee of the section, and until his death he was the Chairman. The section during his tenure achieved remarkable success and impacted positively on the professional practice of librarianship. The section held regular annual workshops and meetings during his life. Although this tradition still continues as his colleagues in the executive have take up the responsibilities to sustain his legacy.

In the field of academics, Mr. Odusanya was a remarkable force to reckon with. His believe in continuous education for professional development may have been the driving force that made him to organize regular workshop for cataloguers and classifiers. He provided opportunities for sponsored courses for many of his personnel, and worked towards the establishment of Library and Information Science programme at Diploma and Degree levels in Olabisi Onabanjo University. Mr. Odusanya was erudite and proficient in writing. His contributions to the literature on Librarianship was modest and qualitative. These academic and other qualities accounted for his smooth accension to the exalted position of University Librarian in July 2004. The position he held until his demise.

Anybody reading this publication will agree with us that a publication of this sort really befit the caliber of late Odusanya. Current Trends in Library and Information Science attracted contributions from Librarians, lecturers in the Library and Information Science practice, and other information professionals.

These contributors are from his library, state and national chapters of Nigerian Library Association. This shows that late Odusanya really touched lives of many Librarians and lecturers in his short life time. Their contributions to this text reflected their love for him.

Entries received for this text were numerous out of which twenty-five entries were selected for publication. The entries selected are on diverse areas of the profession especially those that are of interest to the deceased. These areas are Personalia, Library Science, Information Science, Media Technology and ICT, and Library Services. Articles in each of the areas are carefully researched and written by the contributors. They are meaningful contribution to the literature of Library and Information Science. Consequently, the editorial team is very grateful to all the contributors for responding to our "call for papers" for this project. List of the contributors and their institutional addresses are provided in the body of this text.

The editorial team also acknowledges the efforts and contribution of several individuals who worked tirelessly, assiduously, and round the clock to see to the success of this project. Topmost among them is the Acting University Librarian, Mrs. F. A. Oyesiku, the Library Management, and other personnel in the library that positively affected this project. We cannot fail to acknowledge the technical assistance received in the course of this project. We are grateful to Mrs. F. O. Ajani, O. B. Ogundele, Mr. Lamina Waheed and the entire staff of the multi-media Resource Centre of Olabisi Onabanjo University Library.

As earlier mentioned, entries in this text are put under five groups for ease of reference and consultation. All related entries are grouped together under subjects. The subjects are:

Personalia, 1 entry written by Onatola; Library Science, 9 entries; with lead papers from the Ifidons, and Oyesiku respectively;

Information Science, 4 entries Media Technology/ICT, 5 entries and Library Services, 4 entries with lead paper by Osinulu et al.

We believe that articles packaged in this text, in honour of our departed colleague, mentor, boss and associate, will make an interesting reading to our audience. We are also of the belief that the book in one way or another will enrich our readers knowledge of library and information science or remind them of what they once more.

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QUALITY REFERENCE SERVICE: THE FULCRUM FOR USERS' SATISFACTION

BY
ADEBAYO OYERONKE

INTRODUCTION

In each society there are facilities other than classrooms that can contribute in no small measure to the teaching and learning process. For learning to take place, learners must have access to necessary materials, information and resources. They have to interact with tangible and intangible resources and institutions to ensure some level of performance (Obanewa, 2002).

The academic library has been described as the "heart" of the learning community, providing a place for students and faculty to do their research and advance their knowledge. The librarians and library staff provide numerous services to these users, addressing their diverse needs, characteristics and interests. Nkiko and Ilo,(2006) posited that effective and efficient library services must be entrenched and treasured for Nigerian academics to continually aspire and sustain World class standards in their intellectual pursuits. Any attempt on the part of the librarian to ignore the satisfaction of its users will be done at the institution's peril. Librarians should not only occupy themselves with the acquisition, charging and discharging of books, cataloging and maintaining routine statistical records of the number of people that enter the library daily, they should also have time to reflect on the mission of the library as a service organization. This is why the library management should regularly monitor services that are dear to users (Aina, 2004).

One of the means of meeting the needs of the academic and research community is by providing an effective reference service. The speed and accuracy in dealing with users enquiries by the reference librarian have a great bearing on user satisfaction.

- Reference services are indeed the culmination of all library activities aimed at facilitating the use of the library and its resources. It is perhaps the most demanding aspect of librarianship and its performance can either make or mar the image of the profession as well as the image of the library. The purpose of reference service according to Olanlokun, (2003) is to allow information to flow efficiently from information sources to those who need them. Without the librarian bringing source and user together, the flow would either never take place or take place inefficiently.

Reference work began in the late 19th and 20th century to respond to several forces and trends of which are:

- An increase in the number and variety of information resources available, including, but not exclusively, those found in libraries;
- An increase in the complexity of those information resources
- Jointly, these combine to make it more difficult, in general for people to find the resources they are looking for and to find the information they need within that resources

An increase in the number and diversity of people using libraries leads to a wider range of information needs and enquiries and sophistication with the search for information.

WHAT IS REFERENCE SERVICE:

Reference service according to Oketunji, (2005) is defined to include the professional advice and assistance provided by the library staff from materials in the library's collections or else where, to assist individuals using the library's reading rooms or making enquiries by mail, telephone or on-line to meet their information needs. It also includes range of information products such as guides, directories, databases and the equipment and facilities that are provided to enable research to be carried out to meet information needs. The delivery of materials from the collections to users in the reading room is also included in the scope of reference services. It is the duty of the reference librarian to ensure that information sources are provided efficiently to the patrons

Reference librarians are variously referred to as “mediator” between the user and the information and navigators of information. Bunge and Bopp,(2001) noted that such personal assistance is the essence of reference services and is the fundamental role of the reference librarian. Reference librarians are unanimous about what the successful librarian needs:

- **Subject area knowledge** – what is available in print, online, from other sources. This means not only having a skilled appreciation of reference sources in general but understanding better than anyone else how to dig out data from a given field.
- **Conversational skills** – This means an ability to talk to all types of people to find out what they need. Competence in selecting and acquiring materials from databases to print, almanacs and biographical sources.
- **Manner of approach** –The way and style which the reference librarian approaches a user goes a long way as this would influence the depth and level of the interaction.
- **Conduct a reference interview** – The reference librarian may have to interview the patron – to know what he really wants or needs.
- **Conduct a search** – Without an effective search, accurate information is unlikely to be found.
- **Follow up** – reference transaction does not end when the librarian walks away from the patron. The librarian is responsible for determining if the patron is satisfied with the result of the search.

Ultimately, references service is not simply someone asking question and someone else providing an answer. It is about someone with an information problem working with someone with information skills. Lankes et al,(2000). It is not enough that the books are cared for properly, are well arranged, are never lost... The librarian must put every facility in the way of the users, so that they shall be led on from good to better. He must teach them how, after studying their own wants, they may themselves select their reading wisely. Rice-Livy and Racine,(1997). This falls in line with the five laws of library science formulated by Ranganathan which posited that

the right materials are to be provided to meet the information needs of library users. This can only happen if the library is engaged in a qualitative reference service.

STRATEGIES TO PUT IN PLACE FOR AN EFFECTIVE REFERENCE SERVICE:

- **User education** – this must aim at increasing users' awareness of the enormous resources of a library, the arrangement and the location of materials and rules and regulations guiding their uses. In doing this, there will be a promotion in maximum use of the library resources and facilities, it will also help to improve students' ability to use the library in their subsequent professions and careers as well as enable them to handle information stored in different forms.
- **Use of modern technology** – users of academic libraries are such that needs precision, speed and versatility in making their bibliographic searches therefore, computer skills among librarians should be seen as an invaluable pre-requisite that would help facilitate library computerization efforts and functions in order to meet the demands of the ever growing users.
- **Compilation of reading list** – reference librarians needs to understand the characteristics and composition of users, therefore, these reading lists should be based on the likely user needs which will help to assist library users in their research works and private studies.
- **Accurate shelving and shelf reading** – locating needed books is easy only when they have been properly shelved by their call numbers. Shelf reading helps to curb the habit of placing books in wrong positions on the shelf by users who want to achieve their own selfish motive.
- **Inter-library loan** – since no library is self sufficient in meeting the users' needs, it is paramount for academic libraries to engage in resource sharing as a way of satisfying users' information needs.
- **Environment** – in ensuring users satisfaction, the environment where the interaction occurs must be neat and tidy as a dirty environment has a tendency to put off users. Also, service points should be well marked and highly visible.

- **Good policies** – parent body of academic libraries must provide good policies that provide for orientation, job training and continuing education opportunities for the library staff.
- **Current awareness services** – Reference department of academic libraries must notify users of the library of 'new arrivals' lists of important texts, journals, e.t.c
- **Selective Dissemination of Information** – it is apparent that researchers need information in their area of specialization, therefore, it is very important for librarians to match useful information to prospective users in their area of specialization. This could be done either by capturing the academic profile of a user through a well designed questionnaire then sending the needed information into their mailbox or by keeping files for individual researchers and putting relevant information in the files.
- **Catalogue** – The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), allows users' to retrieve materials from various access points unlike the traditional card catalogue that permits access to materials only through author, title and subject. For academic libraries that still use the traditional card catalogue, they must carry full bibliographical details of a work including the class number, this will make it easier and more time saving for user of the library. The card catalogue must be arranged alphabetically.
- **Compilation of bibliographies** – Lists of available bibliographies should be made, published and pasted where users will have access to them.
- **Reprographic service** – since reference materials are not to be on loan, it is advisable that academic libraries provide photocopying, printing and bindery services. This will enable users get copies of materials they need to use outside the library premises.
- **Outdated and overstretched materials** – materials that fall into this category must be weeded out and replaced by current and relevant texts as users are always excited and eager to make use of current materials.

- **Constant power supply** – to provide a quality reference service, constant power supply is inevitable. Therefore in this era of erratic power supply, the library must have a stand- by generator as it would ease user's frustration.
- **Internet connectivity** – in this modern age of information explosion, no library can effectively satisfy its users' demands without the internet. It is therefore necessary for academic libraries to be connected to the internet service 24hours this will enable the reference librarian explore and have access to unlimited information with which he can answer users queries.
- **Procurement of commercial databases** – By subscribing to the vendors of these databases, access is gained into online journals and books which consist of different modules corresponding to different subjects offered in the institution.
- **Keeping records of books in the bindery** – it is good for reference librarians to keep records of books that have been taken to the bindery for repairs this will curb unnecessary and endless search for books.
- **Funding** – this is very crucial in providing quality reference service. The library has to be well funded in order to purchase resources and equipments that will facilitate the actualization of its aims and objectives.

CONCLUSION

Aina,(2004) opined that the user is very critical to the services of a library, therefore, users must be constantly asked to assess the services and resources provided as this will help the library to improve upon its services. No matter how large the stock of a library is, if the resources are not properly showcased and vigorously used, it might as well be regarded as mere decoration.

It is in this same vein that Egbafe and Muhammed,(2000) citing kilgour, (1985) asserted that libraries should become user driven and information providers rather than collection developers, a departure from bibliographic services to user services. The extent to which users are able to locate and

retrieve materials, feel comfortable with and find convenient the process of library arrangement, develop an unshakable confidence in the library as an information clinic are the benchmark for users satisfaction.

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O.K. ODUSANYA ON MARBLES

I am shocked and devastated by this news!
For about two years I have been serving as a member of his University's Advisory Board... The Board, consisting of people with a wide range of interests and backgrounds, was set up to assist the University in achieving its goal of upgrading its library to a modern, well-resourced library capable of providing services of the highest standing. I will personally redouble my own effort, and so I am sure of others to see that his dreams does not die....

Gboyega Banjo FNLA

This world is not our home!!!... so, Kola came, did his bit and took a bow. Let no one weep.

Elizabeth Ifidon

Yes, its indeed a great loss to the family, the university he worked and the NLA. He was hardworking and dedicated. He was always at NLA functions where he carried out his responsibilities diligently.

Zakari Mohammed

Learning about the death of our amiable ODUSANYA in indeed devastating. What is this life if not just a stage that we all appear to disappear. What really can we do to GOD than appreciate HIM more in circumstance of this nature. We will surely miss the absence of this friendly, hardworking and supportive colleague.

Bayo Oyegade

The sage is gone! Condolences.... To the left behind.

Olorunsaye

