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ORAL INFORMATION DOCUMENTATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

INFORMATION AND SERVICES

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Abstract

History is a body of knowledge derived from the past lives of a society or an individual. The documentation of oral information in the 21st century without doubt is essential. Oral information is transferred from one individual to another verbally and as such there is need to document these information based on their importance. There are different types of oral information passed within a society and this information contains various values such as religious, social, historical, indigenous knowledge and culture of a community as well as genealogy of a community or family.

Oral information are received, developed, and shared to future generations through a wide variety of oral tradition known to the society or community. Nonetheless, in the 21st century, concerns are raised because people's culture and identity are being abandoned and forgotten then comes the need for information professionals and librarians to identify, collect, preserve and actualize the oral information, particularly the information contained in the oral tradition.

The paper views information services' provision as a wheel which provides access to oral information that supports a long or short-term preservation of oral tradition information via documentation. Through the review of scholarly literature and studies, this paper aimed at showcasing 21st century documentation as a symbol of preserving oral tradition to sustain continuity.

Keyword: Oral information, Oral tradition, Value of information, Documentation of information, 21st Century information and services

INTRODUCTION

It has been quite a task to preserve and document all information acquired, most especially the oral information. The 21st century does represent an era of unprecedented growth in the creation, acquisition, organization, dissemination, usage, documentation and preservation of oral information. The preservation of oral information is based on the criteria that consider its intellectual content, uniqueness, significance, value for further research, educational qualities etc. Oral information is the transfer of information from an individual to another by means of verbal aid which could be through discussions, speeches or presentations. Oral information could be conveyed to another person through words, facial expressions, and body language. The mode of oral information includes meetings, conferences, radio broadcast, and interviews.

Oral Information

Oral information refers to communications that are transmitted verbally from generation to generation. In the 21st century, oral tradition is likely to disappear. Oral tradition is going to end in the 21st century, and this is not just an issue of the probable loss of cultural assets in the communities, but also the loss of local values and knowledge maintained in different traditions. There are many concepts in the oral tradition that are still applicable in current life. On the other hand, lack of public knowledge of traditions and values has undermined public awareness of the presence of local culture in society.

Information is today's money, and knowledge is believed to be strong. Every community's oral traditions are linked to knowledge and information, and this knowledge is usually tacit. Tacit knowledge is knowledge stored in the knowledge bearer's brain and cannot be accessible until the bearer chooses to talk to others. Tacit knowledge is stored in the memories of a community's elderly or older members. Only that specific person(s) is aware of the current techniques and implementation of their family's or community's oral tradition, the parameters of the oral tradition's state, as well as the meanings, values, and philosophies included in the community's oral tradition.

There will be chaos if a catastrophe occurs, such as the death of that specific individual, because there is a risk of knowledge loss if information is unrecorded or has not been adequately handed to the on-coming generation. As a result, the oral tradition of the twenty-first century must be

nurtured and protected, not just in terms of form but also in terms of the principles that underpin it.

According to Primadesi, (2014) there are eight measures that may be followed to preserve and document the worth and knowledge of oral traditions in the twenty-first century. The steps are as follows:

1. Capture of information

In the twenty-first century, knowledge capturing is the first stage in the preservation and documenting of oral tradition. It is an activity made to capture and identify all current oral traditions available in the twenty-first century, not only collecting the information but also compiling a list of persons who have mastered the oral tradition (the knowledge holder). There are several oral traditions and information systems in Nigeria. The oral tradition of the North differs from that of the South, while the East's oral tradition differs from that of the West. Each region has its own culture and customs, including oral traditions.

The goal of knowledge capturing is to identify the assets of oral traditions, as well as the information systems and services that are available in each region, such as the variety and diversity of oral traditions, and the prominence of an oral tradition that has become a defining feature of the area. After recognising the oral traditions of each location or locality, we as librarians and information workers must find the elders who are specialists in oral tradition and document their knowledge. An important stage in the preservation process is compiling a list of people who are familiar with the oral tradition.

2. Codification of oral traditions

The systematic arrangement, structure, techniques, and norms of an object are referred to as codification. It is a method of converting tacit information held by elders regarding oral tradition into information that may be transferred into explicit form. According to Faust (2010) there are two techniques to converting tacit knowledge: socialisation and externalisation. The process of passing on tacit knowledge from one person to another is known as socialisation; in this case, knowledge of the oral tradition will be passed down from community elders to those who will maintain it (the librarians or the information professionals). This transmission can take place in a variety of methods, including direct contact with elders, imitation of all behaviours and activities

connected to oral tradition done by elders, and acquired experience. Outsourcing is the transfer to explicit knowledge of the tacit information which is owned by individuals to maintain oral tradition.

Faust (2010) also stated that codification activities can be carried out by observing the mentor's and elder's knowledge, experiences, conducting seminars/workshops, and knowledge transfer activities carried out directly by people who are experts in the oral tradition, and virtual reality can be gained through job shadowing and designing the quark.

3. Oral tradition documentation in the twenty-first century

Through the twenty-first century, the oral tradition permits the message to be lost or decreased through time in procedures due to lack of proper documentation. In order for librarians to chronicle oral traditions and offer information systems and services, they must try to maintain the value of the oral knowledge or message. There should also be documentation of oral traditions that exist in Nigeria and across Africa. Hand written notes, computer-typed notes, and audio-visual documentation are all part of 21st-century documentation.

4. Debriefing and repackaging oral heritage in the twenty-first century

Oral tradition, information systems, and services in the twenty-first century should be packaged in an appealing way for simple access, learning, and comprehension. In addition to historical worth and the worth of local knowledge for the community, oral traditions, information systems, and services are designed to turn a commodity into an object that may benefit the user and its communal heritage. The usage of media (television, radio, newspaper, and internet) has become more common in the twenty-first century. Because it is simpler to accept and understand, the media aids in the transmission of knowledge, including oral tradition, to the next generation.

5. Personalisation

Personalization refers to any knowledge-based activity aimed at fostering a sense of interconnectedness among individuals. This personalisation may be accomplished by incorporation into formal education of people or groups interested in indigenous traditions, and oral information systems and through the establishment of constant preservation and expansion of community oral traditions.

The educational institution (schools), for example, includes social studies, history and indigenous knowledge management as subjects and courses at schools, and it has a very effective role in teaching tradition and culture to younger generations. The inclusion of these disciplines and courses in schools has aided in the documenting and preservation of Nigerian oral tradition. There are a few courses in library information science that have a strong connection to our culture.

6. Bibliography and information science muscle knowledge, as well as the use of ICT for the preservations of oral traditions and the development of information systems and services in the 21st century.

New information is produced and received every second. Libraries, such as academic and special libraries, as well as schools, continue to function as a repository for existing texts and other resources in the community as the world of knowledge increases. Libraries only retain the resources in their possession as part of the library collection. In order to maintain the content of oral knowledge creation in various communities, the library is expected to move from the repository to the provision of local heritage services. The notion of local heritage services promotes public records such as oral history or historical manuscripts. Local heritage services are a concept of library services. If they know anything about papers and not just act as a sign or figurehead, the bookkeeper will be more valuable in this situation. The material is stored in the library. Librarians must be able to interpret texts that convey oral knowledge or tradition in terms of history, the presence of a text, the information included in the text, and other information related with the introduction of text. Libraries need to promote awareness in an active manner by carrying out campaigns for text conservation. The events might include a contest to create bibliographic descriptions of works, a contest to provide services concerning ancient writings, oral tradition art performances, and other events.

In addition, the most important thing is to make the greatest use of information technology in the collection, storage, sharing and distribution of information in this information era of the 21st century. The oral tradition database will be available in all libraries, and information systems and services available in Nigeria will connect it to the internet, giving an excellent platform for exposing Nigeria's oral legacy to the rest of the world.

Other 21st-century preservation measures in the documentation of oral information, information systems, and services include:

1. Search and retrieval by making available to society as much information as possible about oral tradition, information systems, and services.
2. Creating opportunities for the oral tradition, information systems, and services in rural communities to be exported to other parts of the world. How can this be accomplished? It is accomplished by:
 - a. Conducting workshops on various aspects of a rural community's culture, particularly oral tradition, both nationally and internationally.
 - b. Without affecting the content of the manuscript, every oral tradition or information is translated into other foreign languages such as English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, and French.
 - c. Finding the distinctiveness of the community's oral traditions so that they can be used as a cultural identity

The Advantages of Oral Information; Information Systems and Services in the 21st Century

The following are the advantages of oral information, information systems, and services in the twenty-first century

1. An elder with historical facts can give or obtain oral information, information systems, and services everywhere and at any time.
2. Oral history, information systems, and services are less expensive than other historical sources including books, museums, and tourist attractions. This is due to the fact that oral information, information systems, and services do not necessitate the purchase or sale of information. It is freely exchanged, passed along, and shared.
3. Access to oral information, information systems, and services does not necessitate or demand that any individual or person be able to read and write.

4. It is possible to ask questions or require additional clarification from the oral informant in order to obtain more detailed information.

The Disadvantages of Oral Information; Information Systems and Services in the 21st Century

The disadvantages of oral information, information systems, and services are as follows:

1. Oral information, information systems, and services do not travel very far back in time; information transmission is dependent on the power of subsequent generations' memory.
2. The value of oral history is not maintained by oral information, information systems, or services; rather, the value of oral history changes through time.
3. It is possible that oral information, information systems, and services are skewed. This is due to the nature of transmission, which is primarily done orally or through word of mouth. Because oral transmission is not documented, it is rife with exaggeration and inventiveness, and it is common for people to overlook essential aspects in favor of focusing on the positive.

Obstacle to Oral Information Documentation in the 21st Century information and Services in Nigerian Society

Some of the restrictions that may be encountered in oral tradition activities and knowledge preservation include the following:

- a. The elderly are not sufficiently aware of the benefits of knowledge preservation through oral tradition. As a result, some older generations will be brought to the public's attention. These are not something that everyone can learn based on their current expertise.
- b. The government's interest is still based on half of the oral tradition.
- c. The application of Nigerian oral traditions in school curricula has not been thoroughly investigated.

CONCLUSION

The preservation of oral information is quite important most especially because of its nature. Its preservation in the 21st century involves maintaining it in a format that ensures its continued use and easy accessibility when needed. It also involves protecting the oral information from going

obsolete, implementing policies for safe use, protection from ownership, theft and loss of information.

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