

STRATEGIC COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FOR EFFECTIVE INFORMATION DELIVERY

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Abstract

This study explored strategic collection development management for effective information delivery. It detailed the theoretical framework for collection development and collection policy. It presented strategies to actualize collection development viz: budgeting, selection of library information resources, assessment, preservation and conservation. It recommended collection development to be a planned, continuous cost effective activity to meet the need of users and corporate objectives of libraries and their parent institutions.

Keywords: Library Automation, Universities, Appraisal, TIN LIB Software, Nigeria

Introduction

Different kinds of libraries have different objectives, but all exist to provide the services, which users need. Library exists only for the satisfaction of users needs, which may include usefulness and comprehensiveness, currency, speed, validity, practicality and effectiveness (Bhatti, 2013). Libraries acquire and preserve the knowledge that is available in different documentary formats-printed and electronic forms. Contemporary libraries are concerned with provision of information/documents to satisfy the demands/requirements of users (Adomi, 2008).

Library resources, services, and operations have been greatly influenced by rapid technological innovations over the years. The way information is disseminated, captured, collected, stored and transferred has provided a new impetus to library functions and services (Saddiqui, 2003, and Adomi 2008.) The wide adoption of computers and the Internet as tools for communication requires libraries to adapt to new demands from their users to make collection accessible from outside the Library building (Mutula and Makando, 2003). With developments in Information Technology (IT), Libraries can now provide broad access to global information and become less dependent on printed collections (Edem, Ani1, & Ocheibi,2009). Adomi (2008) and Haddow (2013) posit that Libraries must be able to be an "access organization" providing access to an array of information resources. This means having access as the right of use and not ownership of the resources.

Operational Definitions

Strategy: Strategy refers to the formulation of basic organizational missions, purposes and objectives; policies and programme strategies to achieve; and the methods needed to ensure that strategies are implemented to achieve organizational ends (Robson, 1997). In other words, strategy is the pattern or plan that integrates an organisation's major goals, policies and actions sequences into a cohesive whole.

Literature Review

Collection development is one of the fundamental functions of the Library and Information Profession. It involves selection and acquisition of information resources that will enable Library and Information Practitioners to perform their myriad functions to the users effectively (Aina, 2004). Corroborating Aina (2004), Olajojo and Akewukereke (2006), averred that collection development includes everything that goes into acquiring materials which includes selection, ordering and payment. Collection development serves as a foundation upon which other Library services are built. It is a planned, systematic development of a collection based on the objectives of the Library. Collection development and collection management are terms that have often been used almost synonymously though they differ. Distinguishing between collection

development and collection management, Singh (2004) posits that collection development involves the selection and acquisition of Library materials. Considering users current needs and future requirements; while collection management is much more than collection building alone. It involves managing the use of the collection, its storage, Organisation and making it accessible to Library users.

Pryterch (2000), sees collection development as the process of planning a stock acquisition programme not simply to cater for immediate needs but to build a coherent and reliable collection over a number of years; to meet the objectives of the services; the term demands a depth and quality of stock and includes related activity towards exploitation of the collection through publicity. Emphasizing the element of exploitation of Library stock, Adewuyi (2005) posits that while collection development places emphasis on just ownership of information material, collection management goes beyond that by placing emphasis on effective exploitation of information materials.

It is clear from the foregoing concepts that collection management is more embracing than collection development. Collection development is concerned with planning for acquisition through users assessment and design of collection development policy, as well as selection and acquisition of information resources to meet the needs of the users community. On the one hand, while collection management incorporates these activities of collection development, organizes, and maintains Library information resources. It is therefore more appropriate to use the terms "Collection development" and management together.

Meneses (2005), states that collection development and management involve development policies, users' needs assessment, selection of information materials, acquisition, collection evaluation and assessment, de-selection or weeding, intellectual freedom, conservation and preservation of Library and information resources. Basically, this paper focuses on these issues in discussing Strategic Collection Development/Management for Effective Information Delivery.

Theoretical Framework for Collection Development

The theoretical framework for collection development in Libraries is based on Ranganathan's five laws of library science, namely:

- Books are for use
- Every book its reader
- Every reader his books
- Save the time of the user
- A library is a growing organism

Service is the major philosophy on which library and Information Science is premised and the attendant accessibility of relevant educational materials. Consequently, Ranganathan's laws (1964) are germane to the provision, accessibility and use of information materials in Nigerian University Libraries (Ogunrombi, (2005).

Strategies for Actualizing Virile Collection Development/Management:

To actualize virile collection development/management, adequate collection development policy needs to be attainable. A collection development policy establishes ground rules for planning, budgeting, selection, and acquisition of library materials. These factors provide the framework for coordinated collection development programme in libraries. Collection development policy helps the library to serve the user community better (Olaajo and Akewukereke, 2006). Collection development policy explains the content and intent of collection development which include the definition of the scope of a library's existing collections, plan for the continuing development of resources, identify collection strengths, weaknesses, and outline the relationship between selection philosophy and the institution's goals, general selection criteria, and intellectual freedom (The American Library Association, 1987; IFLA, 2001; and Arizona State library, Archives and Public Records, 2003). Accordingly, collection development policy guides libraries

on issues and processes of selecting information materials to satisfy users needs. It also provides criteria for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a developed collection, in meeting the needs of the library patrons. It spells out issues related to content of the collection, format, responsibility for selection and acquisition of library information resources. A collection development policy should not only concern itself with selection, planning, public relations and cooperation and resource sharing (consortia); it should also address the following elements to be effective:

- Community profile
- Community Needs Assessment
- Collection Goals
- Selection Responsibility
- Selection Criteria.
- Acquisitions
- Collection Evaluation and Assessment.

It is imperative to have a written policy. A clear acquisition policy should be formulated in line with the objectives of the library and needs of the users.

Adequate budgeting is another factor for strategic collection development/management for effective information delivery. Collection development is a function of funds. This means that library can only build its collection based on available funds. According to Stacey (1993), strategy implementation is held to depend upon an effective budgeting system. The budget converts strategy into a set of short-term action plans and sets out the financial consequences of those action plans for the year ahead. For a library budget especially in relation to collection development to be successful, it must be directional and must be based on a plan so that there is value for the money spent. Money available for collection development is always limited and heads of libraries go cap in hand to the chief executives of their institutions or establishment, almost on their knees to ask for more funds. Acquisitions/Collection development should not be at the mercy of heads of institutions. Therefore realistic budget should be made for collection development in libraries if they (libraries) must procure, organize and make available to their numerous users both current and adequate information resources.

Another factor necessary for strategic collection development/management is selection of library information resources. The selection of library stock should obviously reflect and be geared towards the information needs of the users. These library/information service-be they the general public, the staff and student of an academic institution, the members of the professional body etc. Bakewell (1997) opines that in order to qualify for purchase, a book must (a) be relevant to the organization's interest, (b) fill a gap in coverage or provide a significant extension of current knowledge.(c) justify its cost, bearing in mind such matters as the importance of the item, size, price, state of the budget etc. According to Bakewell (1997) those who select should consider such criteria as accuracy, clarity of expression, board coverage and appeal when evaluating those materials. In the case of academic libraries, selection should be based on the courses offered in the institution and the needs of staff and student, not forgetting part-time students.

Furthermore, acquisitions of information materials are another factors necessary for strategic collection development/management for effective information delivery. Acquisition is the implementation of selection decisions: ordering, receipt, and payment. These must be done according to a procedure that is guarded by the collection development policy (Olajojo and Akewukereke, 2006) Acquisition forms a vital link in the circle of publishing, selection, request and providing materials for use. The imperatives for acquisitions staff are to acquire information materials as quickly and as economically as possible, while offering an efficient and responsive service.

Acquisition and collection development focuses on methodical and topical themes pertaining to the acquisition, purchase, de-selection of print, other traditional format of library materials (by purchase, gift, exchange, legal deposit), and electronic information resources. Specialized interests include collection development policies, collection development methods, techniques and practices for collection assessment, usage statistics, and pricing ownership vs. access issues, the open access, format duplication, scholarly communication and librarian relations with publishers and vendors. As access to materials becomes an increasingly viable, alternative to ownership, acquisition staff should work closely with serials, cataloguing and circulation section, and any advisory committees that facilitate discussions between libraries and publishers and/producers of electronic resources. Of critical importance to acquisition department should be cooperative collection development (consortia) and application of information technology (IT) to acquisition and collection development process. In formulating its goals, the acquisition section should be flexible and responsive to changing condition in the professional environment as well as in the information industry (IFLANET, 2006).

The Internet and Acquisition in Libraries is another factor in strategic collection development/management for effective information delivery. The internet, especially its graphical world wide web (www) has become one of the most potent tools of information storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in the contemporary society (Adewuyi 2005). Access to Internet includes electronic mail (email), UseNet, www, remote login (telnet), file transfer protocol (FTP), online chat and e-conferencing, which provides those connected to it with an unprecedented amount of information that can be used to their advantages. The information on the net is seemingly limitless as massive volume of information is added to it every day. As information providers, libraries of all types, and documentation and information centers should be the main beneficiaries of the massive amount of internet resources that can be used to noticeably enhance the quality of services and at the same time to save time and money. Internet enhances library cooperation's and services, especially when budget cut by many parent bodies or institutions, fluctuations in exchange rate of currencies, and rapidly growing cost of periodicals; and on the contrary, information needs of users are increasing and diversified. In addition, information explosion has become a dilemma for libraries as they need to be more selective than to be comprehensive when acquiring library resources (Adomi, 2008; Hundie, 2003)

The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) that is gradually replacing the traditional Card Catalogue has been appreciated as the easiest and most effective way of communicating Library stocks to users. Webb and Grimwood (2004), stated that if "Information is to be a widely available resource, it must be organized so that it is easily accessible physically without too many imposed restraints". Ifidon (1997) earlier postulated that "beautiful buildings, well trained staff and modern information storage and retrieval system can only be appreciated if excellent services are given to users. These services cannot be given without live collections". This means that a live collection is the one that has been procured, processed, organized and maintained.

Collection Assessment is another factor for strategic collection development/management for effective information delivery. It is not enough to procure, process and organize information resources for meeting the needs of users, it is imperative to periodically assess library resources to determine their relevance and utility now. According to the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records (2003), collection assessment (also known as collection evaluation) is an organized process of analyzing and describing a library's collection systematically. It is the assessment of the extent to which a collection meets the library's objectives. As professionals, librarians should try to build and maintain collection development goals that are appropriate for their information seekers. Agee (2005) sees collection assessment as one important measure of collection development and management. As important as this function is in libraries, Librarians are hardly engaged in it. How else do librarians ensure that they are building useful collections that would provide a good return on their financial investments (Adomi, 2008).

Weeding of resources is another factor for strategic collection development/management for effective information delivery. Weeding has to do with the process of removing unwanted materials from the shelves for either discard or relegation to remote storage. This is an important element of collection management that ensures that library resources are useful and easily accessible to information seekers. This exercise is vital considering the fact that community needs and goals change, institution's curriculum or the faculty changes and large parts of the collection may fall into the seldom used category (Adomi, 2008). The analysis and evaluation of the collection as a whole emphasizes the necessity of weeding the collection systematically to keep it responsive to patron's need (Buckingham, 1994). Librarians should weed their collection frequently, if the library will not soon become the burial ground for old textbooks, and other items patrons' no longer find useful. Chikezie (2003) identifies problems of collection development in libraries to be poor funding, the tyranny of distances, high prices of library materials, poor accommodation facilities, negative actions of readers, and high illiteracy rate.

Similarly, intellectual Freedom and Access is another factor for strategic collection development/management for effective information delivery. Hannabuss and Allard (2001) asserted that the wider issue is that of intellectual freedom and access, and the role of information work and of libraries. The American Library Association (ALA) (2005) states that freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the function for self government, freedom of expression encompasses the freedom of speech and corollary right to receive information, that libraries and librarians protect and promote these rights by selecting, producing, providing access to, identifying, receiving, organizing, providing instruction in the use of, and preserving recorded expression irrespective of the format or technology (IFLA, 2003). The major challenge for the libraries and information profession is commitment to intellectual freedom and adherence to the principles of intellectual freedom, unrestricted access to information and freedom of expression and to recognize the privacy of library user. Any attempt by a member of the community to remove resources from a library's Collection or to restrict access to them is a challenge to intellectual freedom which the library should vehemently discourage.

Preservation and conservation of Library Resources is another factor for strategic collection development/management for effective information delivery. The very core aspect of collection development and management is conservation and preservation of information resources. Library and Information resources are undoubtedly very expensive, thus, there is need to ensure that they are always in good condition (Aina, 2004 Adomi 2008). Otherwise, it will be a great waste of time and fund to select and acquire materials without taking adequate and proper steps to ensure their longevity.

Trinity College Dublin (2007) and Chester Beatty Library (2007), argued that preservation activities are those aimed to minimize deterioration or prevent changes to the collection. This includes buildings maintenance, environmental control, providing safe storage, security, handling skills training, exhibition conditions, and disaster preparedness planning. One of the main goals of the library is to make its collections available for use by eligible users. This must be balanced at all times with the need to ensure the preservation of the resources.

Conclusion

Collection development is not an adhoc activity, rather is a planned, continuous, and cost-effective acquisition of quality, relevant materials to meet the information needs of users and the corporate objectives of libraries and their parent institutions. Collection development is not only growth in volumes and titles but in the quality of acquired materials in enhancing effective information delivery. It is only from this perspective that the word "development" could be meaningful in relation to collection development.

Recommendations

To have live, virile and responsive collection, the following are recommended:

- (i) Libraries should insist on having a written and functional acquisition policy in libraries;
- (ii) Libraries should also be proactive in ordering library materials continuously without necessarily waiting for things like accreditation exercise to embark on fire brigade approach to acquisitions.
- (iii) Efforts should be made by heads of libraries to refuse to be intimidated but overcome any social, political, economic and environmental factors.
- (iv) Due process principles should be well defined by library managers in relation to collection development to avoid unnecessary bottlenecks and delays;
- (v) Libraries should educate the parent institutions that library automation and Internet connectivity is of high priority for all types of libraries;
- (vi) Libraries should emphasise training and re-training is of utmost importance with regard to resource sharing (consortia), therefore strengthen the committee of University Libraries of Nigerian Universities (CULNU) Consortium.
- (vii) Nigerian Library Association (NLA) Should formulate a standard policy and ensure compliance by all academic libraries for them to enjoy increased funding;
- (viii) Library Development Funds (LDF) in academic libraries should be resuscitated;
- (ix) Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF) for book intervention should not be divested and should be timely accessed by libraries.
- (x) High proficiency in acquisition processes and collection development/management by libraries can improve the status of an academic library.
- (xi) Libraries should key into parent institutions linkages/partnerships/networking for collection development.
- (xii) Libraries should reach out to the Alumni Association for fund raising activities for collection building.
- (xiii) Libraries should tap into Book Exhibitions to rejuvenate your library collection.

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