



Sourcing of Information in A Globalized Environment: the Nigeria Challenge

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ABSTRACT: *The paper focused on the concepts of Information and globalized as well as the context of sourcing information in a globalized environment. The paper buttressed some of the benefits and challenges of globalization as they relate to information. Some recommendations towards overcoming the identified challenges were proffered.*

Keywords: *Information, Globalized Environment, Nigeria*

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Abel (2004) information is a vehicle of challenge and development and as a result no organization and individual or even a nation can experience challenge and development if information is lacking. Information is seen by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Dada et al (2004) as the first element in the search for wisdom in the human development process. It further stated that information can equally be regarded as the process by which we receive the events of external world, giving us the opportunity of forming judgment and making decisions which could be economic, political, moral, scientific etc. IDRC observed that one unique attribute of information as a resource is that the total amount available tends to increase rather than decrease with consumption.

Information can also be described as a renewable resource and if obtained at the right time by, the right people can enhance effective use of other resources. From the foregoing, it has been deduced information is The Master of Resource of our time, the Chief Raw Material and the Principal product of modern economics.

1.2 Globalization In Relation To Information

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2004) sees globalization as the process by which all people and communities come to experience an increasingly common economic, social and cultural environment. The above assertion by IFSW affects everybody throughout the world.

A more integrated world community brings benefits for all, it affects the balance of economic, political and cultural power between nations, communities and individuals and it enhances freedom and human rights. IFSW recognizes that both natural and built environments have direct impact on people's potential to develop and that the earth's resources should be shared in a way to enhance sustainability in human welfare.

Aninat (2002) saw globalization as the process by which an increasingly free flow of ideas, people, goods, services and capital lead to integration of economics and societies. These all border on increase in the flow of information as well as mobility of people across borders and all the benefits derivable thereof. Globalized environment has brought about rapid integration of productive and investment decisions across the globe, increasing breakdown of trading and investment barriers, emergence of truly global companies with vast capital base, rising share of international trade in world output and heightened mobility.

Importantly, Jimba (1998) said globalization is used to describe "the ability to access information using telecommunication based internet resources". It provides the ability to create, organize, manipulate and access information from remote location across the globe in a matter of seconds. Also, information and communication technology can be described as the mechanism to process, store and transmit information which are either in numeric, text or graphic form which make computer applications very central to this mechanism. Uzoigwe (2004) opined that besides symbolizing a new age, the technology had shrunk the universe into a global village, Which is now welcomed for being multifaceted, multidimensional, profit making, time and space saving and no location hindrance. Information and communication technology is made up of the following components: globalization, database, on-line information search, CD-ROM, multimedia, Network Internet,

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World Wide Web (WWW) ETC. Ikpaahindi (1999) observed that probably the most fundamental skill required is the knowledge of the computer, how it functions, inputting and retrieving of information from it. This is a basic skill that should be available to virtually anyone who wishes to operate as an effective human being in the modern world.

Sourcing information on the other hand, according to the survey report of Klynveled Peat Marwic Goerdele (KPMG) in the U.S. (2006) saw information as the planned changes in the manner of conducting a business function such as information collection and reporting, manufacturing, finance, compliance, or administration. The report was of the view that every Executive or board member of any organization must have known that sourcing is employed most effectively as a strategic tool to create, deploy and use as processes that measure the performance, value and risk of their organizations, especially Information Technology outsourcing. As significant investment, sourcing has direct impact on an organization's bottom line, and it affects the organization's culture, risk profile, and day- to- day operation positively.

1.3 Rationale Behind Global Information Sourcing

According to the survey report of KPMG in the U.S. (2006) today's global competitive business environment is forcing organizations to take harder look at their business functions in order to compete effectively. It is of the view that global sourcing is being to propel strategic and tactical change and to deliver tangible value through transformation.

The report observed that the forces that drive the need to source those business functions to vendors spread around the globe are myriad; viz:

- Cost reduction through economics of scale,
- Improvement in customer service,
- Improvement in process quality and efficiency,
- Access to expertise that does not exist within the company (country) as the case may be,
- Capacity management,
- Flexibility to scale up or down,
- Process standardization
- Focus on core competencies by moving administrative functions from operations,
- Improvement in the ability to innovate,
- Entry into markets,
- Acquisition of new customers,
- Leverage technology, standard infrastructure.

If developing countries like Nigeria can take sourcing from a tactical to a strategic initiative from the information perspective with the aid of Information and Communication Technology, there should be:

- Network support
- Data centre operations
- Desktop support
- Communication operations, etc.

Countries involved in sourcing as tools for improvement in their organizations experienced that cost remains their main driver.

1.4 Challenges To Information Sourcing And Processing In Nigeria

The present trend in information provision world- wide is through the application of the information technologies for the provision and expansion of the scope of information available to patrons irrespective of their locations. This has added advantage of ensuring effectiveness and efficiency in information services provided. With all the above derivable advantages through the services of information and communication technologies, there are still some constraints and challenges facing information specialists in information sourcing, retrieving and dissemination of information globally. Alasa and Kelechuwu (1999) gave the following as the major challenges to sourcing information in a globalized world:

1. The first constraint is that of funding. Library funding especially in Nigeria has continued to dwindle since the mid 1980's along with the downturn in the economic fortunes of the country. Libraries in the country are said to occasion by low budgetary allocations.
2. Godwe (2001) observed that over the years, the development of libraries and information centres have suffered greatly owing to the poor economic realities of many of many African countries. He opined further that the slow pace of economic growth in developing countries is a pointer to a bleak future for Africa's libraries and information work. He observed also that the African economic woe, occasioned also by inadequate budgetary allocations, slow pace of technology infusion, inadequate human resource

capacity building, insufficient and obsolete infrastructure facilities and exorbitant cost of information materials have dealt a terrible blow is one of the challenges on library and information services in Africa.

3. Franklin (2002) noted that lack of increased Foreign Direct Investment in Library and Information Services is one of the challenges facing poor countries which Nigeria is not an exception. He was of the view that too much of global investment in the information sector is concentrated in the developed countries while less than ½ goes to the poor, south countries (developing countries) like Nigeria.
4. Lack of interest from both private and public sectors to partner with government in developing information in the country.
5. Poor level of computer literacy and facilities as well as lack of knowledge of importance of information in Nigeria.
6. Poor and inadequate telecommunication facilities.
7. Poor level of awareness of internet facilities and ignorance of decision or policy makers on the power of information network on the economic and industrial development of a nation.
8. A big challenge is for the Nigerian librarians to try to be literate in the use of Information and Communication Technology in order to be able to navigate the internet and use the resources available in the global environment for the economic development and growth of the country.
9. Another challenge for the Nigerian libraries is to be able to generate indigenous information resources that are relevant to our development needs for the purpose of the national development and growth.

II. CONCLUSION

Concrete plans and steps must be taken to make everybody be computer literate in the country. This is because of the enormous roles of globalization and the consequent introduction of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) world which has made the world today a global village. It is no longer a matter of interest but that of necessity for everyone in the country to be computer literate. It is also necessary for all staff of all organizations, being they institutions, industries,, commerce, name them, to be able to navigate the internet to enable them be relevant in today's environments anywhere in the world. With the present level of information explosion, Nigeria cannot afford to be an exception in this global development but to join the League of Nations striving to develop like the countries in the north (developed nations).

Ikpahindi (1999) observed that, probably the most fundamental skill required is the knowledge of the computer, how it functions, inputting and retrieving of information from it. This is a basic skill that should be available to virtually anyone who wishes to operate as an effective human being in the modern world. To catch up with the wave of globalization, there is no option left to the country than to enforce the implementation of ICT project in the citizenry

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Following Recommendations Are Proffered As Thus:

1. Nigerian government must give information a top priority in her development plans at all time because of the importance of information to the socio- economic growth and development of the nation. Information and Communication Technology Facilities such as computers, internet, databases, CD-ROM, Worldwide etc must be acquired, installed and put into proper use by all organs concerned with the acquisition, organization and dissemination of information.
2. The teaching of computer courses should be made compulsory at all levels of institutions of learning in the country and all staff of any organization in the country, be it government or private should be computer literate for utmost utilization and sharing of the benefits of globalization.
3. Government should make efforts to have heavy investment in information sector as it is described the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) as the first element in the search for wisdom in the human development process.
4. There should be sustained training programs for technicians (experts) who will manage ICT tools and facilities.
5. Government should reinvigorate both Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) for enhanced service delivery.

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