

**THE RELEVANCE AND CHALLENGES OF E-BOOKS ON CURRICULUM  
CONTENT DELIVERY AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY  
INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

Okegbile, Binta Ph.D.  
School of Early Childhood Care and Primary Education  
Federal College of Education (Technical) Bichi  
Kano State, Nigeria.

**ABSTRACT**

The major critical issue in teaching and learning, especially among the youth, is the ability to create an effective learning environment, using appropriate learning resources. This paper critically discusses the concept of electronic books(e-books) and its effects on curriculum content delivery in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, recognizing that students in tertiary institutions are gladly and rapidly accepting the use of e-books and other technological innovations compared to reading textbooks or using textbooks for various academic purposes. E-books are still at the early stages of development in Nigeria. Consequently, the paper further examines the challenges of e-books from the perspective of teachers, students, environments, social institutions and government. A critical consideration reveals daily increase in awareness of the importance of internet usage among the youths. This has led to the evolution of electronic books which have significantly changed the reading patterns and attitudes of students in Nigeria. The paper recommended among others that e-books should dominate reference materials in tertiary institutions in the preparation of students to meet with global challenges; teachers and students should be trained in acquiring up-to-date knowledge on the techniques of accessing open educational resources; and that students should be supported to acquire necessary technological devices for accessing and keeping e-books, since such devices are not luxury but a necessity for quality teaching and learning.

**Introduction**

The world today is characterized as an information society. This paper exposes the extent to which information and communication technologies are now been used to capture, control and disseminate information as an important resource for productivity in academic institutions and the society at large.

Therefore, in today's information technological driven world, it is of utmost importance to expose learners and educators to the relevance and challenges of e-books on the curriculum content delivery to students in various institutions of higher learning. This in a bid to prepare them with competencies that will help them handle technologies in retrieving information.

The advent of information and communication technology and its contributions to all spheres of human life generally require training of the teachers and students for effective retrieval and release of information and knowledge through various curriculum content in schools.

### **The Concept of Electronic Books**

Electronic Books (E-Books) refer to technological materials which provide the means of learning through reading resources to enable people to learn anytime and anywhere. This has to do with the delivery of teaching/learning or educational programme through electronic means. Electronic resources therefore are used for storage, packaging, preservation, identification, generation, processing and transfer of information regardless of time and distance. These facilities are used in the dissemination of knowledge and feedbacks in the teaching and learning process in Nigeria, especially in tertiary institutions.

### **Types of ICTs Accessories and E-Books for Content Delivery among Students**

ICT is a broad term that covers a large range of technologies. It is the convergence of computers, communication and electronic based techniques. The technologies and devices like telephone, telegraphy, fax, television, mobile phone, internet, website (www), email, Local Area Network (LAN), and satellite communication are major parts of ICT.

The internet is a computer-based global information system which composed of many interconnected computer network. Each network may link tens, hundreds and even thousands of computers which enable them to share information and processing power (Comer, 2009). The internet is the world's largest inter-connected environment and the most recent communication tool of the world where a user can transcend borders and have access to the encyclopedias, newspapers, bulletin boards, textbooks, journals, periodicals, research works and many others. Information retrieved through the internet has rapidly brought innovations with outcome on human values and it plays a strong role in development and globalization.

The advent of information and communication technology and its application in all spheres of human endeavor has tremendous impacts and its contribution to education is undeniable. However, many Nigeria teachers have been not been able to find effective ways to use technology in teaching learning activities. The possible reason for this limitation may be that many teachers are not well trained in using ICT in teaching as a means of content delivery among students despite the specification as contained in the (National Policy on Education, 2004).

### **Relevance of E-Books to the Curriculum Content Delivery in Schools**

Prior to the advent of ICT, teaching and learning was being carried out using traditional methods such as the lecture, note and expository methods in content delivery. To this effect, the country's educational institutions were said to have experienced a downward trend in performance. This might have prompted the inclusion of science and technology among the core subjects that are being taught in secondary schools.

Oduwale, (2002), opined that ICT has significant impacts on all areas of human activities including the field of education. To some extent, one can say that ICT has undoubtedly influenced teaching, learning and research and it is having a revolutionary impact on educational methodology in Nigeria. This solicits for improving the quality of education through the diversification of contents and methods, prompting experimentation, innovation, diffusion and sharing of information, best practices and dialogue. In the view of Durumaku-Dim (2005), the use of computer is so prevalent in contemporary Nigerian society that any educational programme, of course, must embrace the use of computer to remain viable. To this effect, one can say that e-books and ICT generally have relevance on curriculum content delivery in the following ways:

1. Information and Communication Technologies used with new instructional techniques provides a new modality of instrument. ICT allows for increase individual learning.
2. To a large extent, one can say that ICT has impacted on the quality of teaching, learning and research and the quality of teachers is known to be a key predictor of students' learning.
3. The educators can create awareness and make delivery of contents through the employment of emails, SMS alert, websites and social media to share information especially in a networked environment. This development has brought about a level of change in the educational system.
4. The use of electronic resources for teaching, learning and research is gaining wider acceptability in universities all over the world. Electronic sources are used for literature search, teaching, learning, information retrieval, email and other on-line transactions.
5. The learning process is now increasingly being based on the capacity to access knowledge and to apply it in problem solving. Ojedokun (2007) is of the view that the explosion of information generated and stored in various formats has multiplied geometrically. In the midst of information exploitation, ability to access, retrieve and evaluate information has constituted a significant part of today's definition of literacy.
6. The use of e-books makes it possible to access resources that promote scholarship in teaching, learning and research and this has made higher institutions in Nigeria not to be left-out in the global trend. Anasi (2012) is of the opinion that the use of e-books creates access to varied informational materials and makes collaboration with colleagues much easier.

7. The availability of e-resources, and network that enhances their transfer with ease and speed has greatly influenced information taste and preferences. This has also led to high demand and growth of knowledge.
8. The use of e-books through information communication technology has revolutionized the academic institutions generally. It has become a trend to the extent that it has opened avenues of varied access to information at finger-tips use for the acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information. This has changed the philosophy of information from unitary to that of universal access. It has become an open avenue for current and future academic needs and requirements. To this effect, curriculum has been redesigned to imbibe the current information technology revolution which can accommodate new innovation with ease.
9. Retrieval of information from electronic resources and internet is much simpler, easier and faster in comparison to what obtains under the manual mode of library operating systems in terms of enabling services, acquisition, technical services, circulation, cataloguing and infrastructure.

#### **Challenges of using E-Books on the Curriculum Content Delivery**

It is true that the use of e-books is crucial in today's society in the delivery of curriculum content to students of higher institutions in Nigeria. However, there are challenges or bottlenecks hindering or slowing down the pace of making effective use of these materials in schools. These need to be addressed in order to fully utilize modern technologies in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Some of these challenges are:

1. Inadequate and low funding of education at all levels.
2. Irregular or epileptic power supply is a great challenge to effective access to information service, provision and delivery.
3. Slow access to basic ICT equipment, low-access and connectivity to internet services in Nigeria, low procurement and inadequate supply of computers constitute another challenge.
4. Inadequacies in the use of audio-visual materials and equipment including films, slides, projectors, charts, maps, bulletin boards and programmed materials remain a serious challenge to the use of e-books in curriculum content delivery.
5. Inadequate training of teachers for ICT usage is also a bottleneck to making effective use of e-books and deriving other ICT benefits in higher educational institutions in Nigeria.
6. To use e-books for curriculum content delivery, there is need for availability of ICT equipment, stable internet network and trained personnel to monitor the operation of the equipment in addition to trained instructors or teachers as

the case may be. However, some or all of these are not regularly made available in schools.

7. Many teachers and students rely heavily on textbooks and printed materials such as journals, encyclopaedias etc for their various academic purposes and rarely use e-books and other electronic materials.

### **Conclusion**

This paper presented the relevance of electronic books in the inculcation of knowledge and feedback in teaching and learning in schools. Despite the fact that information and communication technologies offer numerous opportunities in enhancing quality and quantity in the educational process in tertiary institutions, it has been observed that there are still hindrances to the effective use of this very important medium of learning and feedback. These facilities have not really been integrated into the system of education in Nigeria.

The author therefore submits that educators should adopt new strategies in order to create awareness about e-books among students and provide access to the resources available in order to facilitate the utilization of electronic resources to be able to meet the information needs of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

Having discussed the relevance of e-books resources in the education of students in tertiary institutions and the challenges in making effective use of it, the author presents the following recommendations in order to bring into full force in teaching and learning in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria.

1. Government and all concerned authorities should adequately and properly fund the educational sector at all levels.
2. The challenges of lack of, or epileptic power supply should be given urgent attention. Again, a standby power plant should permanently be made available in various faculties, departments, libraries and students' hostels for regular power supply.
3. Access to library resources and usage is a prerequisite to effective use of electronic books. Students should be encouraged to put these resources into use and not for decorations.
4. Teachers and learners should be compulsorily subjected to training and retraining not only in computer literacy but in the application of various kinds of software in order to be exposed to the update knowledge and techniques.
5. Trained staff/personnel should be prepared to help and guide users in handling the technologies and to get adequate use in information search, provision and management.

6. Schools should procure more ICT software for accessibility and opportunity for more students.
7. Electronic materials should dominate reference materials in tertiary institutions for students in various department in order to meet up with global challenges.

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