Textbook Affordability Initiative at AU Nigeria

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Introduction

• The on-going experiment is meant to promote and facilitate the use of E-Textbooks and adoption of Open Access Textbooks (OATs) by Faculty.

• Reduce the cost of textbooks to make education more affordable

• Major actors in the experiment: Director Digital Services (DDS), Information Literacy Manager (ILM), Research & Cataloging Manager (RCM), Instructional Technology Unit (ITU), Faculty and student workers.

• The team used to work in an Open Office for easy collaboration.
Library Open Office
Our Initial Sources for (Text)books

- Book fairs and acquisition trips within Nigeria were the sources for local publications.
- Stocking the Campus Bookstore with Textbooks for students to buy.
- Library purchasing Textbooks and place them on reserve for students.
- Students’ purchase of used copies from colleagues and Bookstores.
- Sharing cost of Textbooks by students of the same level.
- Photocopying Textbook chapters (Copyright issues)
Why E-Textbook Option

• Books are costly as publishing in Nigeria is still at its infancy: lack of skills and customs duty on publishing materials.

• Local authors publish their works abroad for wider market, academic prestige and assured royalty payments.

• Reliance on overseas books is expensive in costs, delays in shipment and custom formalities.

• Few local publishing houses exist in the South but transporting them to Northeastern Nigeria wasn’t secure due Boko Haram activities.

• Budget shrinks and change of information seeking attitudes of our students

• Taking advantage of purchasing habit of our students; preference for hand-held devices to paper books,

• E-resources proved to be the option: cheap, easy to use/share, with free copies available.
Experiment Process

Faculty selects textbooks and submits requests

1. Faculty receive available OATs.
2. E-book Store buys unavailable titles for students

IL team & student workers browse for the titles

DDS consults RCM to confirm non-availability of the title in our collection

ILM & RCM identify relevant OAT Websites
Outcome of the On-going Project

• Students acquired thirty eight (38) titles of 171 E-Textbooks from our E-Book Store of ITU in the last two Semesters.

• Twelve (12) E-textbooks were adopted as class textbooks within the last two (2) Semesters.

• Our New Foundation School (Pre-degree Program) adopted three (3) for students and four (4) for Writing Instructors this Spring.

• More E-textbooks are used than print.

• Student participants seem to be interested in being part of the project.

• Browsing through OATs inspires adventure into other online resources which they are keen to share with colleagues.
Challenges

• Faculty preference for traditional and physical copies as against digital versions.
• Faculty reluctance to replace their familiar course materials with OATs or Open Educational Textbooks (OETs); they question their credibility and quality.
• Limited availability of OATs is a concern expressed by Faculty.
• Some textbooks (of local contents) don’t have digital formats.
• Free textbooks are mostly available for introductory courses.
• Faculty unwillingness to collaborate on OERs project.
• Answers to questions on access challenges are often not handy (sudden disappearance of links or titles)
• Recent rise in cost of E-textbooks due to Dollar exchange rate issues.
• Lack of Librarians with subject expertise.
How we Advocate the Project

• Daily IL classes were held to promote use of digital resources.

• Participants of IL classes urged to download free relevant texts for their use.

• Library shares with other Institutions, Library-On-A-Flash (LOAF), an app that contains free PDF text books.

• A committee/advocacy group on OARs to be made up of Faculty, Librarians, ITU and students is being planned.
How AMICAL may play a role

Amical to create a section to advance the cause of OATs/OERs through:

- Offering Faculty/Librarians development Webinars on OAT awareness programs.
- Organizing workshops and conferences.
- Facilitating the curation and creation of OATs.
- Funding OERs projects of member institutions.
- Compiling guides, bibliographies and indexes to OERs and Websites.
- Coordinating textbook affordability activities of member institutions.
Open Access Textbook Websites

- Open Textbook Library: https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks
- OpenStax Textbooks: https://openstax.org/subjects
- Bookboon.Com: https://bookboon.com
- OERcommons: https://www.oercommons.org/hubs/open-textbooks
- BcCampusOpenEd: https://open.bccampus.ca
- Scholar Commons: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/
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