Pathways to Openness: A Research Proposal on Open Access and Digitization in Nigerian Libraries

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Abstract

Open access and digitization are essential tools for enhancing access to information and supporting research and education. In Nigeria, open access and digitization initiatives have the potential to make a significant impact on the lives of millions of people. However, there is a lack of understanding of the current state of open access and digitization in Nigerian Public Libraries.

This research proposes to map the landscape of open access and digitization in Nigerian Public Libraries. The research will focus on the following key areas:

- Current practices for providing open access and digitized resources
- Policies and procedures for open access and digitization
- Staff attitudes towards open access and digitization
- Funding for open access and digitization
- Infrastructure for open access and digitization
- Use of open access and digitized resources
- Plans for future open access and digitization initiatives

The findings from the research will be used to develop a comprehensive report that will make the following contributions to the field of open access and library science. By conducting this research, Free Knowledge Africa can significantly promote open access and digitization in Nigeria.

Introduction

Free Knowledge Africa's proposed research on open-access practices and digitization of public domain works in Nigerian Public Libraries is an important and timely initiative. Open access to knowledge is essential for education, research, and economic development, and digitization is a crucial tool for making this knowledge more accessible. Nigerian Public Libraries play a vital role in providing access to information, and they have the potential to be major drivers of open access and digitization in Nigeria.

Date: June 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

Related work

There is a growing body of research on open access and digitization in libraries, both in Nigeria and internationally. Some of the most relevant work includes:

- Open GLAM in Nigeria — developments and opportunities for open access (Oloruntimilehin, 2023) This study provides an overview of the current state of open access in Nigerian Public Libraries and identifies some of the challenges and opportunities for further development.
- Case Study of Open Access Practices: Limitations and Opportunities in Public

Libraries in Nigeria (Oloruntimilehin, 2023) This case study examines the open access practices of a single Nigerian Public Library and identifies some of the key factors that influence the adoption of open access.
- Collaborate, Communicate, and Navigate Ethical Considerations with the Ethical Sharing Card Game (Oloruntimilehin et al., 2023) This resource provides a gamified approach to teaching ethical considerations related to open access and digitization.

Despite the growing body of research, there is still a significant gap in our understanding of the landscape of open access and digitization in Nigerian Public Libraries.

Methods

The research will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. The following methods will be employed:

- Survey: A survey will be administered to a representative sample of Nigerian Public Libraries to gather data on their current practices, policies, and attitudes towards open access and digitization.
- Case studies: In-depth case studies will be conducted on a select number of Nigerian Public Libraries that are successfully implementing open access and digitization practices.
- Literature review: A literature review will be conducted to identify existing research on open access and digitization in libraries, both in Nigeria and internationally.
- Key informant interviews: Interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders in the Nigerian library community.

Hypothesis: The adoption of open access and digitization practices in Nigerian Public Libraries is positively correlated with the availability of funding, infrastructure, and staff expertise.

Expected output

- Comprehensive Research Report
- Open dataset
- Case Studies of Successful Open Access and Digitization Initiatives in Nigerian Public Libraries
- Policy Recommendations for Open Access and Digitization in Nigerian Public Libraries
- Training Materials and Resources for Nigerian Public Libraries
- Presentations at conferences and workshops on open access, digitization, and library science
- Workshops and training sessions for librarians on open access and digitization

Risks

- Limited Availability of Data: Access to data on open access and digitization practices in Nigerian Public Libraries may be limited, which could hinder the research.
- Resistance to Change: Some libraries may be resistant to change and may not be interested in adopting open access and digitization practices.
- Infrastructure Challenges: Some libraries may face infrastructure challenges, such as lack of funding, limited IT resources and connectivity, which could hinder their ability to digitize their collections.

Community impact plan

- The research team will disseminate the findings through a variety of channels, including publication in a peer-reviewed journal, presentation at conferences and workshops, and development of training materials and resources for libraries.
- The research team will collaborate with Wikimedia affiliates in Nigeria to promote the adoption of open access and digitization initiatives in Nigerian Public Libraries.
- The research team will develop training materials and resources for librarians to implement open access and digitization initiatives.
- The research team will develop a public API or dataset that provides access to data on open access and digitization practices in Nigerian Public Libraries.
- The research team will engage with the communities served by Nigerian Public Libraries to promote the benefits of open access and digitization and to support the development of community-based open access and digitization initiatives.

Evaluation

The success of this research will be evaluated based on its contribution to a clear understanding of the current state, challenges, and opportunities for open access and digitization in Nigerian Public Libraries.

Budget

Total Budget Request: $28,900
Breakdown:

- Survey Development and Distribution: $5,000
- Logistics and transportation: $2,000
- Case Study Research and Analysis: $6,000
- Literature Review: $2,000
- Data Analysis and Reporting: $7,000
- Dissemination and Outreach: $4,000
- Contingency: $2,900

Prior contributions

We have been in the Wikimedia movement since 2018 with a long-standing commitment to Wikimedia projects and a deep understanding of the organization's values and goals. Co-led a team to secure funding, develop partnerships, and implement programs that empowered over 1,000,000 people across African countries. We have raised awareness about the public domain in Nigeria and carried out Open GLAM advocacy campaigns in Nigeria.

References

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