

Information Repackaging: A Panacea for Libraries and Information Resource Centres in Nigeria

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I. INTRODUCTION

The library and information resource centre goes beyond being seen as a place where books and non-books resources are kept or as reading rooms. It is an organization or a system designed to preserve and facilitate the use of graphic resources. It is a social service created to fill the missing links in any communication process or system that is essential to any society, culture and individuals. It should be noted that without communication, there is no society or culture. The library and information centre provides information for this communication, through the production, selection, acquisition, organization, storage, retrieval and dissemination of graphic resources.

The term library simply means a collection of information resources otherwise referred to as sources of information, carriers of information, information materials or simply documents. The information resources are selected, acquired and organised by the library and information centre staff so that information seekers, clientele can have quick and easy access to them. A good library and information resource centres are one that has a combination of print information resources such as book and non-print or audio-visual resources.

Libraries exist to serve as many groups as possible- disseminating information, preserving culture and providing information for different educational exploits to different groups. Thus, libraries and information resource centres have been in the business of packaging information to satisfy or meet the different needs of the users or group. However, the need for libraries and information centres to repackage information gained more emphasis with recent technological advancements. These advancements have also greatly affected every facet of the information world ranging from information generation, procurement, packaging, dissemination etc. As a result of this many libraries and information centres users have also turned their backs on the library and information resource centres having found alternative in information technology.

The libraries and information resource centres as well as information managers, librarians, knowledge management officers etc must therefore shift their focus from the information provider to the information user, the users' needs must therefore be the guide in information organizational strategies in the libraries and information centres. There must be a shift from the traditional library and information resource centres services to electronic formats and remote access (Iwhiwho, 2006).

Concepts of Information Repackaging

Many scholars have examined Information Repackaging in different ways and have arrived at the same meaning. Agada (1995) defined information Repackaging as a systematic approach to the design and provision of information services, particularly in the co-operate environment. Saracevic, and Wood (1981) and Bunch (1984) are of the view that Repackaging in how an information service selects appropriate materials, reprocessing and repackaging the information and arranging materials in a way that is appropriate to the user. However, for Iwhiwho (2006) Information Repackaging is bundling of products and services to address specific needs.

Information Repackaging is therefore organising or processing of information in a form that can be understood by the different categories of users that the various information are meant for. It is interpreting and converting information into a form that the different target users can easily understand it. Information Repackaging is therefore a way of improving services and a systematic approach to the design and provision of information services.

II. ORIGIN OF INFORMATION REPACKAGING IN THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTRES

Information Repackaging is as old as the library and information resource centres because the library and information resource centres has been involved in the process right from its carries out its traditional library and information resource centre practices in its bid to satisfy the different information users. Thus libraries and

information resource centres exist to serve as many people as possible, disseminating information, preserving culture and contributing to intellectual and social lives of different categories of its users.

Some of the traditional library and information resource centres practice are:

- a. **Selection:** No library and information centre is self-sufficient in any given field of knowledge. Libraries and information have developed bibliometrics and various other methods for selection of literature that will respond to the high demand for quality information that will reduce user frustration, enhance the production of man power and other economic resources are selected and acquired for the library and information centres.
- b. **Organization:** This is the arrangement of information into different knowledge facets or sub headings. It involves cataloguing and classification, indexing and also the creation of other systems of bibliographic control. This is the most technical aspect of information management in the library and information centres.
- c. **Reference Services:** This involves directing users to the different locations of information source, exposing users to different information tools, answering different questions from users. The reference services also deal with the provision of specialized information to different information users.
- d. **Information Service:** This includes also the provision of specialized information on demand by users. It can mean publishing new information in different fields and making such information available to users. This service can also include the Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI). The SDI demands that information is sent to different parts of the parent body where it will be useful to individuals e.g. circulating information on students scholarship, New arrivals into the library, etc.
- e. **Readers Advisory Service:** This involves helping users to the choice of desired information; it is a form of information packaging.
- f. **Interlibrary and Information centre Loan:** The service is carried out by the library and information centre to make sure that information in the library and information centre is fairly distributed to users on demand through co-operations among various library and information centres.
- g. **User Education:** The user education service consists of steps geared towards equipping the user on how to search for desired information in the library and information centres.
- h. **Information Display Service:** This is the act of using packaged information or new arrivals in the library and information centres.
- i. **Bibliographic Service:** This is done through the compilation of indexes, abstracts, bibliographies and reading lists on specific subjects or topical issues relevant to the institutions, programmes, courses taught and examinations conducted for students.

The above traditional library and information centre services are just few out the many that the library and information resource centre carries out. Information Repackaging has therefore existed in the library and information centres for decades now. Rosenberg (1987) confirms this by stating that librarians and information managers have long been involved in repackaging of information for their clients. But the issue in this technological era is not in the provision of the traditional library services or in the volumes of books acquired but the extent to which users are benefiting from the traditional library and information centre services. How far are the users making use of the resources in these library and information centres generally? This should be the measurement of the effectiveness of the utilization of library resources and services. There is therefore no doubt that the library and information resource centres has been involved in the traditional library practices to ensure that information gets to the different categories of users to satisfy their various information needs. But the development in information technology has only posed challenges which also call for changes in the traditional library and information services, if the library must remain relevant in the present era.

III. FORMS OF INFORMATION REPACKAGING

Information Repackaging can indeed take different forms. According to Iwhiwho (2006), Repackaging is bundling of products and services to address specific needs. In other words, it is organizing information in distinct special ways to satisfy the information needs of the different categories of its users. The following are the forms of Information Repackaging:

1. **Reformatting and Synthesizing Raw Information:** This means changing the original form or state of information so as to make it easier for the user to comprehend.
2. **Combining expert or consulting on a subject with access to relevant information sources:** This is engaging experienced librarians, information managers or subject specialists and reference librarians in packaging in a format that can satisfy the different users of information.
3. **Providing training or assistance to a user in accessing an information products:** This could be in form of user education programmes, library orientation programmes. These programmes enable the users to be able to effectively exploit the libraries and information centres. To add to this, Omekwu and Ugwuanyi (2009) have enumerated The following are the objectives of user education programmes:

- a. To provide the user with a general overview of the academic library and information centre.
- b. To describe the organizational set up of the library and information centres
- c. To describe the nature and varieties of resources kept in the library and information centres.
- d. To teach the students how to use the library and information centre
- e. To explain the value and use of reference sources
- f. To highlight and describe the potentials of modern technologies in library and information centres
- g. To introduce users to on-line information resources and basic skills in web research.
- h. To teach the users how to write term paper and develop study skills
- i. To teach the users the fundamental of referencing or scholarly citation practices.
- j. To introduce the use and usefulness of different areas subjects in specific libraries and information centres such as the law and medical libraries.
- k. To inculcate in the users qualities they need to proper in the scholarly enterprises.
- l. The repackaging of information in the library and information resource centres could also be shifted from the popular prints media to oral formats. In other words, the oral format should also be added by the libraries and information centres information users. Sturges and Chimsen (1996) have therefore suggested the following information repackaging formats;
4. **Drama:** This is practical display of some practices or actions that captures the five senses. Information of all sorts could be transmitted through this medium. The message that need to be transmitted could be reading culture, HIV and AIDs awareness and prevention, it could be patriotism, cultural awareness etc.
5. **Use of Songs:** Different messages or information on different issues can be used to compose different songs in different languages. In this case, the wordings are carefully chosen to depict in clear terms the information to be transferred.
6. **Story Telling:** Information can be packaged and passed on to the targeted audience as an interesting captivating story. It is one of the most effective ways that could be used to repackaged information especially to illiterate information users. It could be adopted by the library and information resource centre through the use of mobile libraries in the rural communities. Aboyede (1984) in his research on communication potentials of the library for non- literates suggested that sitting in a relaxed atmosphere and being read to was completely new experience which villagers found most enjoyable. In this mood whatever type of information could be converted or packaged as stories and transferred to the particular audiences that such information is meant for.
7. **Audio Visual Resources:** Information could be repackaged through the use of audio visual resources. Many definitions abound as to what the audio visual resources really are, most of such definitions are in terms of equipments and resources and their use in the learning process. According to Udensi (2004). Audio visual resources include objects, models, photographs, paintings, drawings, diagrams, films, charts, posters, specimens, bulletins, boards, project materials, slides, filmstrips, audio recordings, video recordings, transparencies, motion pictures etc. Information can be repackaged and transferred through the use of audio visual resources. Repackaging of information through the use of these resources is indeed one of the most effective ways that information can be successfully transferred from one group or another in any society.
8. Different desired information on the war against indiscipline, War against Corruption, war against over population (Family planning), getting people back to agriculture, developing culture on reading, girl child education, war against sexual harassment etc can be successfully carries out through these media.
9. **Translation:** Information can also be repackaged through the translation of relevant documents into various local languages in the society like Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, etc. Important information can also be translated into pigin English that the common man on the street can easily understand. Translations can also be done in the Newspapers using simple English. This can also be done through such media like fact information sheets like posters, hand bills, magazines, pamphlets etc. In this way important information on different issues can be repackaged in different dialects and taken to the grassroots in the different communities.
10. **Oral Transmission:** This involves passing important information to people using trained individuals; it is a person to person process. It therefore involves training the resource persons that will be used. The erroneous information on immunization and HIV and AIDs could be erased using this form of information transmission. The resource persons that will be used will be well trained in order to be effective.
11. **Poetry:** Information can also be repackaged using poetry. Information messages on different subject areas like culture, bad habits, good habits etc had been successfully transmitted through this medium. Sometimes, the message will be on criticizing a bad habit or upholding a good one, emphasizing a good subject or criticizing a bad one. This is done using different figures of speech like simile, synonyms, proverbs, repetition etc.
12. **Technological Tools:** Madu (2004) defined information technology as the coming together of computing and telecommunications for the purpose of handling information. On the use of information technology tools repackage information. Adesanya (2002) in his definition of information technology stated that it is

the skill that permits dissemination of information at greater value, effectively and efficiently to the world at large through a number of media. Information technology is therefore a welcome development in the world of information repackaging. Some of these information technology tools include computer data bases, compact disks, CD ROM etc. A data base is a collection of files containing related information stored and could be retrieved at a desired time for the purpose of dissemination. A data base is therefore a storage devices, information can be repackaged and stored in this device.

Information can be replaced using optical disks which can be grouped into three namely the video disks, digital and computer disks. For the information contained in each to be retrieved and disseminated, the device has to be connected to a micro computer. They are all information storage devices but their capacity in terms of information storage differs. The Compact Disk Read Only Memory (CD ROM) which is a compact disk has a very high density in terms of information storage capacity. Information on different subject areas can be organized and storage in the CD ROM.

The beauty of the CD ROM as an information storage device is that, it can be retrieved from the main source and transferred or disseminated to various other points of usage or to various targeted groups. It is very easy to access. It can also be accessed from various other points via the computer. It is very compact, and portable, the information stored in the CD ROM lasts for a very long time. The CD ROM is very useful in information repackaging because it can store information in texts formats, graphics, in audio, moving images and can also store a combination of these in various formats using various media facilities. This means that information in books formats, encyclopaedia, journals, dictionaries, directories, games, video programmes can be stored in this device.

Information can also be repackaged through the following:

- **The Internet:** Information can be repackaged and circulated via the different internet connectivity. Oni (2004) rightly stated that the internet offers a wide range of services which can enhance library and information centre operations or services. Thus for e-commerce can be used by libraries and information centres to advertise different services provided to different categories of information users. The different information available on different subject areas could also be advertised through this medium.
- **The World Wide Web (WWW):** This allows all kinds of documents containing texts, video sound and dynamic graphics or pictures to be hyperlinked together. The entire collection of these documents are stored in computer system (called Websites) around the world, Oketunji (1999). Information on different subject areas ranging from library and information centres services available, information on population, the world economy, etc can be repackaged through this to all parts of the world.
- **Wide Area Information Service (WAIS):** This contains varieties of information data base on different subject areas like bibliographies, different library catalogues, journals, abstracts, textbooks etc. These can be retrieved fully by users. Information can be repackaged through these avenues.
- **Bibliography on disks:** This is sometimes referred to as libraries disks. Information on different subjects for targeted groups could be repackaged using this. Hundreds of users can read the information in this through a computer with a modem, even at the same time.

The steps involved in Information Repackaging

- a. **Knowledge of the Target Information Users:** Having a good knowledge of the users the proposed information is meant for is a very essential step in the process of information repackaging. In the first instance, what is the message? Who are the target users? Is it the youth, the adults. Is it for the children, pregnant mothers, or is it for the rural dwellers, farmers, one particular profession or the other etc?
- b. **What are the information needs of the target group?** – There should be a need assessment of the target group in order to have a clear knowledge of their information needs. This ought to be done through various means. It could be done through oral interview of the people, observations, interactions etc.
- c. **Choose appropriate format to repackage the information:** The choice of a suitable format that will be used to repackage the information depends on the target group. Is the target group literate or illiterates? Are they urban or rural dwellers? Are they youths etc.
- d. **Channel of dissemination:** This is the choice of a medium to pass the information across to the target group. The type of target group also determines to a large extent the channel of the information dissemination. A message to the rural dwellers could be done through one to one interactions, storytelling etc. These channels may not work out well to transmit a message for any group in the urban or university settings.

However, Sturges and Chimesen (1996) have suggested the following as processes involved in information repackaging:

- a. Study the potential users

- b. Select primary information sources
- c. Evaluate information content
- d. Analyse the content to permit restructuring i. e (condensation, rewriting etc)
- e. Package or repackage the structured information. This should accompanied by feedback from the users to enable proper evaluation and adjustment of the entire process.

The Source of Resources to be Repackaged

The choice of the resources to be repackaged will depend largely on the information need at a Particular time and the availability of information sources. Information to buttress a message could be sourced from various available literature, research publications on findings in various subject areas or fields, government statistical publications, information acquired through network browsing, grey literature, magazines, daily newspapers and text books.

Evaluation of Resources to be Repackaged

The information to be repackaged should be properly evaluated in order to get desired results. The following can help to evaluate information to be repackaged:

- a. **Accuracy:** Be sure that your information is accurate
- b. **Complete:** Be sure that the information is complete, not in piece meals (half truth and half lies)
- c. **Simplicity:** The information you want to repackage should be presented in simple language. It should also be very clear and easy to understand by any lay man.
- d. **Readability:** The information should be bold and readable, big vocabulary should be avoided. The design involved should be bold and clear, it should not be clumsy.
- e. Use various means and people for the dissemination of the information to the target group. This, is previously stated depends on the type of the target group.
- f. The structured message should be direct and meaningful to the target group.
- g. In cases where posters will be used, short paragraphs and bold prints should be used, as to accommodate people with sight impediments.

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