Managing Digital Information through Social Network among Business Education Undergraduates in Public Universities in South East States, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study aims at managing digital information through social network among business education undergraduates in public universities in South East States of Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted in the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 280 undergraduates from the population of 619 of year three and four undergraduates from the four universities that offer business education in South East States. Data were obtained through the researchers' structured questionnaire, which was validated by three experts. The overall reliability coefficient value of 0.79 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha Statistical Tool. Data were analysed using mean. Findings show that the use of Instagram and blog as social network platforms to a great extent can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East States. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the curriculum of business education be updated by appropriate bodies to accommodate the current trend in technology advancement that would encourage the acquisition of digital skills by undergraduates.

Keywords: managing, digital information, social network, business education, undergraduates

Introduction

Over the past few decades, global environments have faced some technological changes which have led to exploring opportunities for smooth running of the society. These changes have also led to the emergence of manifold new technological social networks. Thus, digitalisation has made it possible for individuals, organisations, and institutions especially students to exploit the technological opportunities, while gaining online experiences in diverse areas of knowledge.

Digital technology makes use of information and communication technology to collect store, analyse and share information, provide relevant technical support for innovation and creativity in diverse fields of study. Digital technologies ranged from computers, information networks, internet, world wide web, intranets and extranets (Chisenga, 2006). These information and communication technologies are capable tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store and manage information (Blurton, 2007). Hence, digital technologies have the capabilities of delivering, supporting and managing effective information.

Digital information can be described as information that is created, manifested, stored, retrieved, interpreted and disseminated electronically. It is multi-sensory, multi-dimensional, modular and dynamic. Digital information is multi-sensory when it engages in multi senses, while taking cognisance of the time passage. As multi-dimensional, it incorporates increased use of dimensions of time and space using multi-faceted approach to information. Digital information is modular as it could be broken into intelligent components that can be experienced, understood and reused separately or in combination, and as dynamic, it incorporates experience that could be altered by user interaction. Digital information therefore is the knowledge shared or obtained through the use of technologies. It may include messages, pictures, diagrams, descriptions, intelligence, fact, video or signal. It also presupposes that the ability to manage digital information, knowing what to share and obtain can help save time, establish best practices for divulging information and stay organised.

Interestingly, digital information connotes electronic information. It is a well organised personal information system that facilitates and stimulates better and more intensive utilisation of accumulated information. Thus, stimulating creative thinking and improved style of intellectual work of user. Digital information is a value creating means where individual gets involved in what is trending around the world. It could be said that the increasing knowledge especially among the students in the 21st century is believed to produce an explosive increase in their needs for advanced knowledge. Digital information comprises data that are created by, or prepared for electronic systems and devices and can be managed using computers, communication devices by storing in devices or the cloud. The use of electronic media in the preservation of information explains the place of information management. This management of information is a critical activity and has the task of ensuring the best possible use of information to achieving set goals (Krcmar, 2015). Managing information in this context involves the organisation of and control over the structure, processing and delivering of information. It includes the students' ability to use the relevant infrastructure to collect, preserve, edit and deliver information using the guiding principles that allow information to be available to the right people at the right time. All information both digital and physical require proper management.

The management of information in the past by students in South East States Universities in Nigeria, were done through analogue system. Information and instruction were mainly on paper, giving way to superficial and occasional user-orientation rather than imparting skills. This system has been found to be inadequate as it fails to provide systematic and regular user instruction services. Information in this system had been in form of notebooks, files, loose sheets, cards and desk diaries which posed limitation to access and speedy dissemination to users. These inadequacies invariably account for the use of digital information management (DIM).

Digital information management (DIM) is the optimal organisation of information by integrating digital and physical records based on the expectation of the institutions or individuals. In the school system, students could easily collaborate and interact over documents. It also allows for interaction with more people anytime anywhere automatically, thus, saving cost while widening individuals' knowledge. Heinzl and Uling (2016), reported that managing information includes the process from the creation, organization, storing, dissemination, maintaining and disposing information. Consequently, managing digital information is believed to allow for enhanced utilisation of accumulated information for creative thinking and improved intellectuals. This means that increased access and acquisition of information and knowledge by students through the use of social network not only make them confident and wiser but influences their relationships.

The wide range in the dissemination of information to larger society through social media have been acknowledged by scholars. Brynolfsson and McAfee (2011) explained that social media networks are platforms or sites that facilitate the building of social relationship among people of different races and providing opportunities for them to share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real life connections. The achievement of this objective to great extent is dependent on the digital information skills possessed by the individuals, which in this study are undergraduates of business education in the university. The level of knowledge, skills, competency, expertise gained or experience through social network stimulate conditions or real life practice and situation to confidently interact with the digital skills. Rakshit (2015), explained that social media networks are collection of online websites, which operate through community-based interaction. Social network is based on the crux of people to people interaction. It could therefore be said that social networks enable the students not only to perform chats but gain information and knowledge of goods and services available in the market and job opportunities in the labour market. Social networks platforms which are not limited to whatsap, facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blog, Instagram, youTube have purposes such as; education, healthcares, social, business, personal polities, among others. The platforms serve several functions including building connections, online classes, skills acquisitions for empowerment programmes among others. Of these social network platforms listed, instagram and blog are germane to the study considering their educative roles they perform.

Instagram is a social network platform hosting millions of people. The platform allows individuals to follow users that one is interested in, thus, creating a feed on one's homepage, while showing recent posts from everyone followed. According to Ben (2021), instagram is a free social networking services built for visual sharing. Moreau (2021), reported that instagram is a simplified version of facebook. Like other social networks, it interacts with other users by following them, commenting, liking, tagging and private messaging. It is one of the social networks with versatile applications, which can capture everyday moments and add comments to the pictures and offer a new range of possibilities to get closer to the investigated reality. This interactive application is very widely used among students and it is free, making it easier for field workers to include it as a complementing tool. Mansor and Bahim (2017) aptly stated that it is an effective platform that encourages interaction among students with their peers in group works related to videos they shot on the teacher's led task.

Instagram has many functions among which are creating accounts, applying filters, adding captions, tagging users, posting contents or 15-second videos, and locations, adding bastags, like contents, adding comments, browsing and following other accounts check feed generated by followed accounts, and exploring users (Ali, 2014). Furthermore, the author explained that Instagram seems to be a perfect tool to support english learning as it offers a plethora of contextualised visual data than can provide aid in language classroom. In a classroom, Instagram can consist in creating a socially connected community of learners as it gives room for students to communicate and socialise with each other beyond classroom. Thus, the application of Instagram in learning process could be seen as applying topics learned in class into real life environment. It is not surprising that Instagram offers a great deal in the classroom (Krist, 2011). Furthermore, Handayani (2016) reported that Instagram serves as a source for applying a number of activities in classroom like digital storytelling, grammar activities through photos, role-plays, reading, speaking through videos among others. Studies also revealed that it is a tool for developing writing skills (Soviyah & Etikaningsih, 2018), and increasing students' motivation to learn and participate in classroom activities (Purnama, 2018). In addition to this platform, blog has been identified as a tool for information management.

Blog is an online journal or informational website displaying information in reverse chronological order, with the latest posts first appearing (Aaron, 2017). Blog, which is short form of weblog is the act of creating and maintaining an online diary where information is chronologically posted, updated frequently and presented in reverse order. A blog is a website maintained by individual, with regular entries on commentaries, descriptions events, or interactive media such as videos or images. While performing several functions, Alavi and Leidner (2001) stated that blog allows storing information in archives with easiness of despairing it through online communities. They are tools that facilitate communicating thoughts and opinions to the wider public (Pinjamaa, 2016). Blog purposes ranged from economic, social, religious, health to political. Commenting on its social purposes, Nkem and

Ojiakor (2020) maintained that through blog, individuals can become experts in online editing, web development, data security specialist, online training, certification and e-marketing. Suffice it to say that blog is a huge opportunity for societal and individual's development. It is not unlikely, that through blog, individuals especially business education students could bring their daily activities online substituting face-to-face communication with virtual and exchanging real social interactions for online acquaintances.

While it is acknowledged that the use of social network platforms has significantly promoted digital information management in the several institutions, empirical evidences on its use in public universities in South East have remained at the infant stage. Consequently, leading to limited literature on veracity of social network in the management of digital information and mostly among business education undergraduates. The study therefore attempts to assess the extent to which the use of social networks can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent to which the use of social networks can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates' public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the extent to which the use of:
1. instagram can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria.
2. blog can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study
1. To what extent can the use of Instagram promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria?
2. To what extent can the use of blog promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. This design aims at studying a group of people or items by collecting and analysing data from only a few considered to be representatives of the entire group (Nworgu, 2015). The population for the study was 619 undergraduates comprising 335 year three and 284 final year of the Business Education Department from the four federal universities that offer the programme. The source of information was from the examinations and records of the Department in the various

institutions in 2021/2022 academic session. The sample size of 310 (comprising 168 year three and 142 year four) undergraduates, which is 50 percent of the entire population was selected using the purposive sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was the researchers' structured questionnaire titled: "Managing Digital Information through Social Networks" (MADISON).

The questionnaire was made up of two sections. Section A provided demographic information of the respondents, while section B had two clusters providing information on the research questions which were designed on a four point rating scale of very great extent (4-points), great extent (3-points), moderate extent (2-points) and low extent (1-point). The questionnaire was further subjected to face validation by three experts, two from Business Education+ Department, and one from Measurement and Evaluation Unit of Science Education, all from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha statistical tool. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation. Decision making was based on a criterion mean of 2.50. Mean scores of 2.50 and above were regarded as great extent, while below 2.50 was low.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responses on the extent to which the use of Instagram can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria (n=312)

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Creating opportunities to organise information for improving situations.	2.74	0.72	Great Extent
2.	Encouraging active participation in information digitalisation.	2.86	0.69	Great Extent
3.	Enabling communication with larger audience.	2.71	0.73	Great Extent
4.	Developing skills for the creation of digital information.	2.80	0.73	Great Extent
5.	Increasing awareness for the acquisition of different kinds of computers skills.	2.71	0.74	Great Extent
6.	Providing skills for the management of information content through videos.	2.79	0.73	Great Extent
7.	Inculcating knowledge to interact with peers around the globe.	2.72	0.74	Great Extent
8.	Awakening talents on digital information utilisation.	2.72	0.73	Great Extent
9.	Creating socially connected community for wider communication.	2.80	0.73	Great Extent

Table 1 shows the mean scores of great extent on all the items (1-9) with standard deviations ranging from 0.69- 0.74 respectively. The Table therefore indicates that to a great extent the use of instagram can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East States.

Table 2: Mean Responses on the extent to which the use of Blog can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria (n=312)

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1.	Improving communication skills for information documentation.	2.87	0.76	Great Extent
2.	Acquire blog skills to filter digital information.	2.76	0.72	Great Extent
3.	Improving online experiences on information management.	2.85	0.71	Great Extent
4.	Providing opportunity for creative use of information.	2.80	0.71	Great Extent
5.	Accessing needed digital information with confidence.	2.73	0.75	Great Extent
6.	Exchanging opinion for the acquisition of more knowledge.	2.77	0.73	Great Extent
7.	Accessing online information websites for higher information usage.	2.72	0.74	Great Extent
8.	Maintaining online diary for proper record keeping.	2.56	0.70	Great Extent
9.	Updating personal information frequently for accuracy of data.	2.63	0.74	Great Extent
10.	Acquiring digital skills for editing of online information.	2.51	0.69	Great Extent
11.	Acquiring e-learning skills for sourcing business ideas.	2.59	0.75	Great Extent

Data on Table 2 indicate the mean scores of great extent on all the 11 items and standard deviations ranging from 0.69 to 0.75. With all the items accorded as great extent, the Table therefore shows that the use of blog can greatly promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Findings showed that the use of instagram can greatly promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East

States. Respondents indicated that the great extent in the use of the platform is evident in the creation of opportunities to organise information for improving situations, encouraging active participation information digitalisation and communication among larger audience. This may not be surprising considering the fact that some of the actions performed by instagram include creating a socially connected community of learners and that give room for students to go beyond the classroom. The view is supported in the findings of Purnama (2018) that instagram increases students' motivation to learn and participate beyond the classroom activities. This may have probably led to the findings of Soviya and Etikaningsih (2018) that instagram is a tool for developing writing skills. The finding is not unconnected with the fact that social network platform, such as instagram provides skills for management of not only life activities but information content as well. More so, it provides skills for the management of information content through videos. This view also agrees with Handdydni (2016) that instagram serves as a source for applying a number of activities in classroom like digital storytelling, grammar activities through photos, role-plays, reading, speaking through videos among others.

Findings further indicated that the extent to which the use of blog can promote management of digital information in public universities in South East Nigeria was high. Respondents noted that improving communication skills for information documentation, improving online experience on information management, and accessing online information websites for higher information usage were some of the features in the use of blog. This may not be surprising considering the fact that blog is short form of weblog that is purported at creating and maintaining an online dairy where information is chronologically posted, updated frequently and presented in reverse order. This view corroborates with Nkem and Ojiakor (2000) that through blog, individuals can become experts in online editing, web development, data security specialist, online training, certification and e-marketing. There is the likelihood that business education undergraduates will translate and exchange real life activities with virtual experiences. While maintaining online diary for proper record keeping, and updating personal information frequently for accuracy of data, blog is conceived as performing several functions and can be used based on various levels of choice by individuals even among business education undergraduates. This view agrees with Alari and Leidner (2001) that blog allows storing information in archives with easiness of displaying it through online communities. This implies that various activities carried out through blog as a social platform could be viewed in line with maintenance digital information.

Conclusion
The study concluded that to a great extent Instagram and blog are social network platforms that can promote the management of digital information by business education undergraduates in public universities in South East States.

Recommendations

In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made.

1. The curriculum of business education should be updated by appropriate bodies to accommodate the current trend in technology advancement that could encourage acquisition of digital skills among undergraduates.

2. Government and other relevant authorities should ensure adequate ICTs are provided in business education studios in order to expose learners on the use of modern technology equipment of digital information management advancements.

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