

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Internet is a global network of computers linked together over large distances (Daramola, 2004). It was created by the American Military as a means of communication and has been in existence since the 1950's. Up until the mid to late eighties commercial organizations and educational institutions mainly used the Internet. This was due to high costs. The rapid development of technology has seen improvement in communication links and a lowering of costs. The implication of this is that the Internet is now more widely available to more people.

Since the Internet is now available to a wide sector of the population in the western world many educational establishments have seized on its educational potential (Audu, 2006). The Internet is a valuable source of information for students looking for ideas for projects and assignments especially the final years students who must carry out a compulsory research work to meet the academic requirement/criteria for the award of various degrees in the higher institutions. With over 50 million web sites on the net the chances are any information however obscure can be found (Fatoki, 2004). The only tools required to find this information would be some patience and a decent search engine. It also serves as a useful tool for lecturers in helping to prepare lesson plans as there are a number of sites, especially in America, dedicated to providing educational material (Adegboji & Toyo, 2006). And also to ascertain the correctness of any information obtained during the course of research works.

It also serves as a forum to promote group discussion, which is time and distance independent. There are many forms this group discussion can take. These include video conferencing, where by the use of a small video camera and microphone members of the group can actually see and hear each other. Also group discussion can take the form of chat rooms where everyone comes together in a host area and communicates with each other via the keyboard (Daramola, 2004). This has particularly helped distant learners in communicating with their project supervisors to provide proper guidance during their research work. This is the platform distance education is based upon.

Although there may be many advantages to be gained from using the Internet as an educational tool for final year research work but there are also many drawbacks. For first time users the Internet can be a very unfriendly environment but with frequent use users can get familiar with pretty quickly (Igun, 2006). The amount of information available on the net means that user tend to be side-tracked with a lot of unnecessary useless information. As the Internet is not owned by any one there are no checks or censorship of information available. The upside to this is that information is freely available to everyone without restriction but the downside to this is that information can be placed into the wrong hands. Also as there are no checks on the information on the net this may lead to inaccuracies and misleading information being published. Final year students can mistakenly make use of wrong information in their research work taking it to be right.

The Internet is heavily dependent on hardware which can be expensive especially as the Internet is constantly evolving. This therefore means to take full advantage of this evolving technology; upgrades in hardware and software are required. With the advent of the Internet education has definitely benefited in more ways than can be mentioned especially the final year students doing research works but it will not take

over the traditional methods of education, it will continue to play a major part in research and development in the respective higher institution of learning.

University of Uyo was established on October 1, 1991 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The University of Uyo inherited students, staff, academic programmes and the entire facilities of the erstwhile University of Cross River State established by Cross River State in 1983. Academic activities commenced during the 1991/92 Academic Session.

It is located in the heart of Uyo, capital of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria's second largest oil producing state. Uyo is easily accessible by road and there are two international airports within 150 km radius. Currently, it operates from two temporary campuses; the Main Campus which accommodates the Central Administration, Faculties of Arts, Education, Social Sciences, Natural and Applied Sciences, Pharmacy and the Post Graduate and Annex Campus, home for the Faculties of Agriculture, Business Administration, Law, Engineering, Environment Studies and General studies. The permanent site of the University is along Nwaniba Road, Uyo is about 4.5 km from the city centre and covers an area of about 1,443 hectares.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigerian university undergraduates are required to carry out research projects in their final year in the university. Project writing is a major pre-requisite for the award of degrees in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Every student considers project writing important to his or her academic success. Research project writing involves a student or group of students carrying out a study on a topic of interest. When the project is completed, it is evaluated by the quality of the work submitted within the stipulated time. It is used to indicate the student's ability to select, research, and draw logical conclusions from findings. The quality of the research project is to a large extent dependent on the quality, quantity, and how recent the resources consulted and cited. The use of the Internet (if maximized) plays a major role in helping undergraduate researchers' access large number of materials from different parts of the globe.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of this study:

- To examine the impact of internet on student's final year research.
- To examine other educational benefits of internet to final year students.
- To determine the advantages and disadvantages of internet on students education.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the impact of internet on student's final year research?
- What are the other educational benefits of internet to final year students?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of internet on student's education?

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

HO: There is no significant relationship between internet and student's final year research.

HA: There is significant relationship between internet and student's final year research.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The following are the significance of this study:

The outcome of this study will educate students especially the final year students on the impact of internet on the final year research work.

This research will be a contribution to the body of literature in the area of the effect of personality trait on

student's academic performance, thereby constituting the empirical literature for future research in the subject area.

1.7 SCOPE/LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will cover the benefits of internet to the final year research work of final year students of the University of Uyo.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

Financial constraint- Insufficient fund tends to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (internet, questionnaire and interview).

Time constraint- The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study with other academic work. This consequently will cut down on the time devoted for the research work.

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IMPACT OF INTERNET ON STUDENT FINAL YEAR RESEARCH (A CASE STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITY OF UYO)

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