

NIGERIAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS AT THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON OPEN ACCESS REPOSITORIES: NEW MODEL FOR SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION, 28-29 APRIL, 2008, ABU, ZARIA

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I feel particularly privileged to be here today to address this august gathering to mark the opening of an international workshop on a new model for scholarly communication through Open Access Repositories. On behalf of the Nigerian Library Association, I welcome you all, especially our international Resource Persons to Nigeria and to the Library and Information Service community.

I am especially gratified that eIFL.net has chosen to discuss this theme because there is no more auspicious time than now to address the issue of Open Access repositories in Nigeria. We are at a very critical period in our national life when we are rigorously examining the way we use the resources at our disposal in order to chart a new path for more efficient and effective use of these resources. We are in the era of 'Reforms' in every sector and the wind of 'Change' is blowing very strongly.

In the Library and Information Service Sector, we have not been left behind. We have been looking inwards, we have done a SWOT analysis of our Sector and have developed Actions Plans to redress our weaknesses while building on our strengths. We have already begun the process of benchmarking our services to reposition ourselves to overcome the challenges that face us in the information age. We are currently reviewing our Library Schools curriculum, auditing ICT facilities and services in Nigerian libraries, developing standards for the libraries as well as running various capacity building programmes, including author training workshops and how to improve scholarly communication.

Our numerous tertiary institutions and research institutes are the major producers of primary research that initiate innovation and stimulate national development while the libraries have the traditional role of collecting, organising, preserving and disseminating these intellectual outputs. However, with the advent of Information Age, these traditional roles are experiencing changes that impact significantly on the management of scholarly communication. Technological changes have made it possible to engage in digital publishing and have increased the volume of information published considerably, the cost of print publishing model has increased significantly, thereby making it difficult for libraries in developing countries to sustain subscriptions and preservation of materials have posed a major challenge to librarians. On the other hand, communicating scholarly information through the use of Open Access repositories provide the added advantages of faster publishing opportunity, greater visibility for authors and institutions and cheaper access. It is for these reasons and more that I appreciate the theme for this workshop and eagerly look forward to the outputs.

Open Access have been variously defined but the three most frequently used are the BBB definition (Budapest, 2002), Bethesda (2003) and Berlin (2003). The Budapest Open Access Initiative defines Open Access thus: we mean its free availability on the public internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the full text of these articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any

other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, should be to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited while [Bethesda](#) and [Berlin](#) statements say that for a work to be Open Access, the copyright holder must consent in advance to let users "copy, use, distribute, transmit and display the work publicly and to make and distribute derivative works, in any digital medium for any responsible purpose, subject to proper attribution of authorship...."

Mindful of the global trend of dwindling resources available to service sectors, mindful also of the fact that the ICT sector in Nigeria is fraught with many challenges and in view of the need for Nigeria and Nigerians to become more visible globally through more effective scholarly communication, it is important that we take advantage of the Open Access movement to develop institutional repositories that would both promote use of local content as well as facilitate access to global research. The cost of access to and dissemination of scholarly communication is still comparatively high and complex in Nigeria. As gatekeepers and gateways to scholarly and other information, library and information professionals must re-orientate themselves, have a change in attitude and adopt flexible ways of providing service to our clientele in order to remain relevant in the academic community. Open Access repositories provide an excellent opportunity for researchers and librarians in Nigeria to leverage on, to leapfrog and to become a part of an international community of researchers. Herein lies the import of discussing how to deploy the full benefits of Open Access repositories to the citizenry. Providing free access to peer reviewed scholarly communication on the Internet and being able to use the information in an ethical manner is bound to revolutionize the conduct of research in Nigeria. When research is conducted in an internationally accepted environment, using internationally accepted norms and when such research findings are used efficiently, they would have a multiplier effect on the development of our society – create a platform for genuine democracy, stimulate innovation, support poverty alleviation and facilitate our attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, the Education For All goals and the Nigerian President's Seven Point Agenda that seeks to make Nigeria one of the twentieth largest economies in the world by the year 2020.

At a meeting in the Hague on 5th December 2003, the Governing Board of IFLA put out a Statement which among other things affirmed that comprehensive open access to scholarly literature and research documentation is vital to the understanding of our world and to the identification of solutions to global challenges and particularly the reduction of information inequality. It advocated the adoption of specific principles to ensure the widest possible availability of scholarly literature and research documentation.

In line with this, the Nigerian Library Association supports Open Access and commits to promoting it within the Nigerian community. We endorse open access for all journals, dissertations and conference proceedings in the LIS sector in Nigeria. We shall continue to provide Open Access to our conference papers and shall employ all legitimate means to encourage our members to archive their preprints and postprints in open-access, OAI-compliant archives. We plan to launch a database of Open Access resources and encourage Nigerian libraries to join The Scholarly Publishing & Academic Resources Coalition (SPARC), a consortium of academic libraries that promote Open Access.

At the end of this workshop, the Nigerian Library Association expects that more librarians would have a better understanding of the need to adopt Open Access, participants would help

in developing a strategic plan to enhance the deployment of the skills acquired, join in the promotion of Open Access and draft a national policy for implementing and sustaining Institutional Repositories and Open Access.

In closing, let me acknowledge the pivotal role that eIFL.net has played in promoting the use of electronic resources in Nigeria. Under the Open Society Initiative, a workshop organised in 2002 led to the establishment of a consortium for university libraries in Nigeria, NULIB Consult Ltd. NULIB has been successful in negotiating, in collaboration with eIFL.net reduced costs for electronic databases for Nigerian universities and have organised workshops from which members of the Nigerian Library Association benefited. eIFL.net appointed the 1st Vice President of the NLA as her country representative in Intellectual Property and Copyright Issues in Nigeria, have appointed three additional librarians to represent the various programmes in Open Access, Free and Open Source Softwares and Consortium Building. It sponsored the participation of four Nigerians to the West African Library Association conference in Accra, Ghana in 2003 (the President of the NLA and President of WALA were among the beneficiaries). They also facilitated the donation of VSAT facilities to 10 universities in Nigeria through the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). They have also agreed to sponsor a resource person to our national conference in Kaduna in June, 2008 to speak on Digitization and Copyright issues. eIFL.net program areas in Nigeria have expanded from bulk licensing of e-resources and support to the building of sustainable library consortia, to advocacy and capacity building in open access and the building of institutional repositories, intellectual property and copyrights and deployment of open source solutions for libraries. Indeed, their contribution was aptly summed up in a posting made on 13 March, 2008 by Electronic Publishing Trust for Development and I quote “eIFL doesn’t stand still in supporting developing country research. It leaves an impression of whirlwind activity around the world in support of scholarly information exchange”. From the foregoing, it would be right to say that eIFL.net has changed the face of librarianship in Nigeria for the better and for our mutual benefits. For all these and the many more collaborations we shall engage in the near future, I say a million thanks to eIFL.net and pledge our continued commitment to the goals and ideals of your organization.

I would also like to use this opportunity to appreciate the Vice Chancellor, staff and students of Ahmadu Bello University for their unflinching support to the development of Library and Information services in Nigeria and support to the University Librarian, Professor Zakari Mohammed. Professor Mohammed is the Assistant Editor-in-Chief of our journal and has made significant contributions to building the Association. We thank you for accepting to host this workshop and for the very warm welcome extended to us. Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, may I use this opportunity to inform you that the Nigerian Library Association annual national conference will hold from 1-6 June at the Arewa House, Kaduna. We have sent a formal invitation and look forward to your continued co-operation and support.

I thank NULIB Consult Ltd, a consortium of the Committee of University Librarians for taking the initiative to run capacity building programmes that empower librarians to use electronic resources and for providing electronic databases at a cheaper cost to the academic community.

Finally, I urge all participants at this workshop to make the most of it and thank you all for your attention.

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Secretary, West African Library Association

Ag. Registrar, Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria

Member, Board of National Library of Nigeria

Member, Board of Nigerian International Book Fair Trust

Member, Standing Committee, IFLA Africa Section

Member, Standing Committee, IFLA Public Libraries Section

Member, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award Advisory Committee, 2006.

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