THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLEDGE

Knowledge and Use of Uniuyo Website by Academics of the University of Uyo, Nigeria

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Abstract:
College and university websites serve a myriad of purposes. They are a resource for academic research, a hub for current students and a source of news for alumni. Moreover, websites offer great significance in the level of overall corporate performance and achievement, providing at the same time, improved nature of memorable experience with the institution by stakeholders. The University of Uyo is not left out in this experience as it hosts a website named www.uniuyo.edu.ng. This study assessed the extent of knowledge of academic staff about the website and found out their perceptions, gratifications and challenges of the academics regarding the website. It found that majority of the academic staff were aware of the existence of the website, perceived it as an information source that was easy to use, accessible and interactive. The academics used the website majorly as a means of sending and receiving information internally and for collaborations with colleagues outside the university as well as for research purposes. However, poor /unavailability of network, dated information as well as low computer skills among other factors majorly impeded their optimal utilization of the website. The study recommended that university management works towards increasing the availability of network and sustain access, interactivity as well as offer periodic training to academics on website usage.

Keywords: *Websites, digital media, utilization, corporate communications*

1. Background to the Study

In the era of increasing adoption of information and communication technologies, digital communication has witnessed another dimension of transformation within corporations especially as there has been a significant shift from the use of traditional to digital means of communication made possible by the advancement in technology in the twenty first century. One of the trending tools, or conduits through which communication is made possible within organisations have been a computer-powered or electronically directed means known as websites.

As observed, momentous attention has shifted from analogue which basically involves the use of manual information routes, to digital routes including the use of computer-facilitated instruments or channels, such as internet where web 2.0 application are domiciled. Internet use in communication is noted for its excessive and pivotal functioning bringing information to people more easily with just the click of a mouse, as is popularly said or with a tap to any mobile device's screen where there is need for information of any kind or use.

Organisations that rely on information and communication have more to achieve within periods shorter than, exactly on or a little above stipulated time. Communication facilitates the prompt spread of information, understanding of feelings, sharing difficult moments, discussion of emotional issues, sharing of ideas, expression of goodwill, and other general benefits of communication (Wilson, 2006).

Communication in an academic system, one could say, is as important as it is in other corporate entity, (if not even more in terms of need). Because of the increased level of information need between the internal and external components in a university education system, Communication and its tools guarantee processing/delivery speed, effectiveness, accuracy; potency of message is made ideal at the management and decision-making level of (concerned) institutions. Universities for instance, use websites as a platform for the generation of information about their institutional existence, information about the available courses, programmes and faculties, the direction on how to connect with tutors, information on the processes of admission, information on the grading system of the university, among other vital information that may be considered by different potential stakeholders.

An argument on the significance of information to an organization especially higher level academic institutions of learning, like the University of Uyo, can be positively sustained that it is the life-wire of the organisation that connects not only the interests of external and internal publics of the institution, but also a tool for corporate communication, reputation management, advertisement, promotion, institutional relationship management with competitors and a tool for enhancement corporate performance.

Grounded on the importance of information and communication within organization and the role websites play in providing prompt and accessible information about universities in Nigeria and other countries of the world, the imperative of evaluating the level of knowledge and usability of websites in the university of Uyo by their staff, caught the interest of the researcher, thus this study.

As there is no value-free research, the usefulness of the findings of this research will be pertinent in various dimensions, sectors and to numerous stakeholders. The findings of this study will be of immense benefit to staff of the University of Uyo and other universities on the need, importance and reasons why they must understand and adopt website in their corporate behaviour and culture. For the staff of the University of Uyo particularly, the findings of this study will equip them on the areas in which website communication is vital to the accomplishment of their task, as well as the special merits they can enjoy through the adoption and use of the existing university's website. For staff in other universities, they will learn about the advantages of using their institution's websites.

More so,the findings of this work will equally serve as reference resources for researchers in the field of, business and organizational communication, business administration and other related disciplines. This study in addition to other existing literature will provide valuable and related materials for literature review.

The findings of this research will unveil a fresh research area and idea to students, researchers and academia with the aim of flourishing the academia with sufficient research work in this aspect. To the public, the findings of the study will widen the horizons of members of the general public on what utilization they can make from the use of websites in their corporate endeavours especially those in a multicultural organization like (Uniuyo) and those working with digital communication enhanced corporations.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The era of great human and institutional (corporate) dependence on communication for meaningful existence and profit making, has provided a profound and considerable necessity for management in the areas of decision making as well as what communication channels and strategies can confer on such organization the status of effectiveness in its corporate life.

Researches in the area of corporate communication (with particular emphasis on internal communication), has focused on both traditional (manual) and digital (electronic)channels or tools as well as assess what stakeholders do with such tools and the benefits or utility they derive from the use of those tools in their corporate existence.

Observation by the researcher has shown an increasing rise in the adoption and use of websites by Nigerian universities as platform for communication between organizations and their associated publics more intensely and the general publics, more loosely. Studies in this area show that staff and students of these institutions make use of websites for various purposes depending on their level of knowledge on the use of such technologies.

Significant research efforts and concentration has focused on what students(both potential and current) use websites of the universities for and the level of gratification derived on using those sites for their information's and communication needs. There is observed however a seeming paucity of empirical research on the area of staff usage and knowledge of the existence, functions and usability of websites in the universities in Nigeria.

In the University of Uyo, there seems to be inadequate research findings on whether University of staff are aware of the existence of websites for the institution and therefore make use of the websites in their corporate functions.Because of this information gap, the researcher seeks to answer this cardinal question, to what extent are the University of Uyo academic staff knowledgeable about the university's official website, and to what extent do they deploy the website, *www.uniuyo.edu.ng* in their corporate functions? Consequently, the following questions are raised for the study

- To what extent are academic staff of the University of Uyo aware of the existence of Uniuyowebsite (www.uniuyo.edu.ng)?
- What do academic staff use the website for in their corporate lives?
- What is their perception of the university website?
- What challenges (if any) impede their optimal use of the University website for their corporate functions?

1.2. Review of Concepts and Literature

This chapter which concerns the review of all documents and material that have theoretical or academic relevance on this work is arranged in the following format and subheads; review of concepts, review of options, review of studies and theoretical framework.

1.3. Website

The concept of Website has generated an increased seriousness in the level of intellectual attention by scholars in fields such as Computer science, Computer engineering, Computer programming, website management, and other related fields. This has led to the proliferation of expressive differences in the decryption and definition of the term, even though with literary and theoretical interdependence and relationship. To Technopedia (2016), a website is a collection of publicly accessible, interlinked web pages that share a single domain name. They can be created and maintained by an individual, group, business or organization to serve a variety of purposes. Together, all publicly accessible websites constitute the World Wide Web.A website is also known as a web presence. In the view of Computerhope (2020), a site or website is a central location of WebPages that are related and accessed by visiting the home page of the website using a browser.

Website therefore entails all of the visible or understandable presentation of the public face of some form of distributed information or system that is meant to command actions or responses based on need of users. Cailliau (2007) delves further deeper into the subject of website as the collection of related network web resources such as web pages, multimedia contents, which are typically identified with a common domain name and published on at least, one web server.

Websites are accessible via public Internet Protocol (IP) network, such as the Internet, or a private local area network (LAN), by a uniform resource locator (URL) that identifies the site. Websites are designed to perform many functions and can be used in various fashions. A website can be a personal website, a corporate website for a company, a government website, an organization website, etc. Websites are typically dedicated to a particular topic or purpose, ranging from entertainment and social networking to providing news and education (Boaduo, and Babitseng, 2007).

All publicly accessible websites collectively constitute the World Wide Web, while private websites, such as a company's website for its employees (including those of institutions and corporations), are typically part of an intranet. Web pages, which are the building blocks of websites, are documents, typically composed in plain text interspersed with formatting instructions of Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) Boaduo, and Babitseng (2007).

Websites may incorporate elements from other websites with suitable markup anchors. Web pages are accessed and transported with the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), which may optionally employ encryption HTTP Secure, (HTTPS) to provide security and privacy for the user. The user's application, often a web browser, renders the page content according to its HTML markup instructions onto a display terminal. Hyperlinking between web pages conveys to the reader the site structure and guides the navigation of the site, which often starts with a home page containing a directory of the site web content. Some websites require user registration or subscription to access content.

Cailliau (2007) explain that the World Wide Web (WWW) was created in 1990 by the British CERN physicist Tim Berners-Lee. Before the introduction of HTML and HTTP, other protocols such as File Transfer Protocol and the gopher protocol were used to retrieve individual files from a server. These protocols offer a simple directory structure which the user navigates and where they choose files to download. Documents were most often presented as plain text files without formatting, or were encoded in word processor formats.

Any website according to Ani and Ahiauzu (2008)can contain a hyperlink to any other website, so the distinction between individual sites, as perceived by the user, can be blurred. Websites are written in, or converted to, HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) and are accessed using a software interface classified as a user agent. Web pages can be viewed or otherwise accessed from a range of computer-based and Internet-enabled devices of various sizes, including desktop computers, laptops, tablet computers and smartphones.

A website is hosted on a computer system known as a web server, also called an HTTP (Hyper Text Transfer Protocol) server. These terms can also refer to the software that runs on these systems which retrieves and delivers the web pages in response to requests from the website's users.

1.4. The University of Uyo ICT policy

The University of Uyo ICT policy is a guideline for proper, efficient and effective support and development of ICT functions within the university as a means of utilizing the available human and technological resources for teaching, learning, research, community service and development. The policy document is a necessary guide for developers, users and managers of information and ICT resources on appropriate standards to conform to recognised international standards and industry best practices for adoption by Uniuyo for the acquisition, development, usage and management of ICT resources to ensure availability and proper use and utilization of ICT in executing Uniuyo functions.

1.5. The University of Uyo Website

According to the University of Uyo ICT policy document chapter 11 section 4, it is the policy of the university of Uyo to have an official website (uniuyo.edu.ng) that showcases the university to the rest of the world in disseminating current and up to date information from all organs of the university (Faculties, Colleges, Departments, Directorates, Centers, Institutes and Units).The purpose of this website is to provide the staff with the necessary information about the functionality of the university website as an effective communication medium for the benefit of the University community and the world at large.The website among other things enhances the university presence on the internet and broadens recognition for the university while strengthening its image. It is also meant to enhance the quality of the Uniuyo website through the publishing of current and informative content in an acceptable manner. Also, it supports a sustainable information and communication infrastructure that supports the university mission, goals and objectives through an online presence. Finally, it optimizes resources to streamline and automate the development and maintenance of the Uniuyo website as a quick and easily accessible means of communication with the university's target audience.

The University of Uyo website code-named *www.uniuyo.edu.ng.*is the official website of the University of Uyo. As one opens the site, the university name and logo greets one.They are engraved using bright colours green and white. Above the logo is the different domains of the website where users can access namely: student log in, A-z index etc.

As one clicks the drop-down menu below the logo, one will find the *University Vision* and mission, core values, history, goals and objectives, organogram, admissions, schools, facilities, e-portals and library. The next is the news update page which contains current news about notable events in the University. Then is the *events and gallery* section. Following is the *publications* section that contains journals, policies, inaugural lectures, convocation lectures and public lectures. Another page of the website is what is called *Recent News and News Archives* where the visitor can have access to news and current news as well as look up old news on the University. Still another page is the **Video Gallery** of the website which harbours video formats of events and programmes of the University.

The other important sites of the website include:

- WiFi Hotspot request form. ICEESSR – Centre for research and Development
- Clinical Science Journal (wjmbr)**.**Curriculum Studies Journal (IJEM)
- Institute for Health, Safety, Security, and Environment,(HSSE)**.**Studies-Open Coreware

- Uniuyo Students Information Handbook. Prof Stella Idiong at Gallery
- Other important information includes
- Duration of programmes and conditions for graduation. University and faculty Honours Roll
- College of Health sciences. Regulations for Pharmacy. Transfers Use of the library.
- Health services. Student welfare services. Regulations governing general behavior of students. Faculty of Education. Jolly Phonics Project.
- Quick Links such as
- Liaison Office. Uniuyo Anthem. Organogram. SIWES. Emails.Servicom Charter
- Honorary Graduands. Confirm Me. Photo Gallery. E-learning. Uniuyo Parents. WiFi Hotspot.

From the foregoing, it can be clearly seen that the University of Uyo website is very rich contains information that can satisfy its user information and communication needs.

1.6. Gratifications from Website Usage

Several studies conducted on knowledge, use or accessibility of organisations websites throws more light on the focus of this section. Manzoor, & Hussain (2010), Mankoff, Fait, and Tran (2005) in their studies made important submission that highlight the fact most organisations in the twenty first century have a good knowledge about the existence and significant (areas of) usage of websites in their operations Ani and Ahiauzu (2008) adds that members of an organization get information from the web pages in measures that are in tandem with their desires for knowledge on any subject matter that relates with their quest. Nwagwu and Agarin(2008)also submit that the web is one of the available avenues open to the universities to provide information for purpose ranging from advertisement of their activities, admission processing, information dissemination to staff and students, teaching and research. Also writing Website and Internet resource for the teacher, Barikzai (2009)opines website should be a profile for a company and institution where it can frequently post all its important information. Further, Shaik (2005) cited in Barikzai believes that a website is the identity of an institution. Through a website, an institution can share all its programmes and activities with the rest of the world and everyone can get to know about it, Barikzai (2009).

Organisations in contemporary times use websites to gain or earn credibility. Ryan & Valverde (2003) aver that by building and running a website, organisations and their businesses have the opportunity to tell consumers why they should trust such organisation, while also giving the opportunities to provide testimonies to back up such claims. Here, it is argued that websites present opportunity for learning about the credibility of companies in relations to what their service claims are, in addition to the provision of opportunities to share reinforcement messages from a web of customers such as testimonials, experience and so on.On this ground, evidences reveal that many customers search on the websites of organisations for products and services before making moves for acquisition.

1.7. Websites usage and University Communication

In today's highly developed academic societies, universities have recognized the importance of having websites to be able to benefit from appropriate academic communications, Rezaeean, Bairamzadeh and Bolhari (2012).The use of website in communication comes with some benefits to universities. Scholars have highlighted several benefits of the university and higher education website which clearly demonstrate the need and importance of a website for higher educational institutions. Mankoff, Fait, and Tran, (2005) submit that an effective website is essential in attracting new students as well as for serving the needs of current students thus there is need to make the website globally in print the opportunities provided by their institute so it can be accessed worldwide.

Ryan & Valverde (2003) argue that institutions and their programs can go through a peer reviews process that is coordinated by private and state accrediting organizations via institutions' websites. These organizations are made up of higher education professionals who evaluate quality based on the organization's established standards.

Ozok & Salvendy (2003) found that Higher education web sites provide all the information about the courses that could boost a student's career prospects and earning potential, while giving them the chance to immerse themselves in a subject that is really of their interests. The authors stressed that this can be achieved by authorizing a HE (higher education) website to ensure that education provided by institutions of specific higher education meets acceptable levels of quality.

Further, website helps ensure higher education institutions are providing a 'basic level of quality' and each institute can be easily accessed by private state accredit organizations and quality education provided the specific institute can inspect easily. Making website in an institution can be very beneficial and efficient for the students (Manzoor, & Hussain, 2012). In the hands of an able teacher, the web can play a prominent role in fostering development of such skill as critical thinking, problem solving, written communication as well as ability to work collaboratively with other students, Murgor (2015).

Higher institutions need a web site to globally compete with the other Higher education's institutes. The University needs to promote institutions activities online as well as provide information on its achievement and other programs, which can be achieved through the university website because it gives an identity to the institute worldwide and can be accessible to anyone from anywhere (Manzoor, & Hussain, 2012).

In this era of online registration, Shaikh and Lenz (2006) submit that website is a very useful feature that facilitates students' academic experience through the provision of detailed course catalog and to maintain the record of faculty by having a detailed academic profile of each faculty.

University website serves the non-commercial information that is needed by students and faculty - information like the complexities of curriculum choices and the information about the daily events and procedures that happens within a busy university campus. Freshysites (2019), opines that with the diverse roles played by university websites, it is imperative for colleges and university website to be designed with the utmost care. It is expected, that any university should own a website as the absence can be devastating in effect to the image and reputation of such institution (Manzoor, & Hussain, 2010).

We conclude the discussion in this section by highlighting Study International Staff's (2019) opinion that now-a-days, the need for higher education institutions to have a reliable, effective and attractive webpage is increasing as online technology is becoming an important part of the educational process. According to them, the higher institutions play a vital role in the development of a society while higher education websites have a lot of roles to fill. They need to provide information for prospective students, current students, faculty, parents of students and alumni.

1.8. User- friendly Websites

For a website to be successful, it must not only look good but also provide a seamless user experience for the visitor. In web design, good website usability is about making it easy for visitors to find information they need quickly and easily. Singh (2013) proffers ways that organizations could adopt to make websites usable and be perceived as friendly. They include

- Mobile compatibility which entails checking how the website appears on mobile devices since many users access the internet through mobile phones.
- Accessibility: An organizations website must be accessible to a majority of the people.
- A well- planned architecture is another feature: The website sections and categories must be planned carefully and information presented in a manner that users can easily find. Moreover, user friendly websites must be well formatted such that contents be easily accessed.
- Easy scan: This is important because as Singh posits, users most time skim through contents of a webpage to determine if they are relevant instead of reading each and every word from top to bottom.
- Fast load time: User friendly websites also must have fast load times usually 4to 5 seconds to avoid users leaving the website.
- Browser compatibility is another feature that designers of websites must take into consideration.
- Browser consistency: A user- friendly website must appear and behave consistently across all major browsers
- Effective navigation: Navigation should be clutter –free and the number of menu items should be limited.
- Error handling: This entails displaying the right error messages which improves the general usability of websites.
- Valid mark-up and clean code. This is achieved by adhering to the relevant web design best practices and standards which ensure that the website is robust and dependable as well capable of loading faster, appear consistent across browsers and devices and also locate and troubleshoot when the need arises.
- Contrasting colour - scheme: Good contrast between background and text on a white background makes content on the website legible and easy to read.
- Usable forms: To get the best out of the site, forms should be easy and accessible to the user. This can be achieved byusing correct labels for all fields, following good form principles, keeping the number of fields to a minimum etc.
  Moreover, while writing on 'Web design: a key factor for the website success', Flavian, Gurrea and Orus (2009) assert that a website addressed to simplicity and freedom of navigation provides clear, timely and accurate information in all its contents and appearance align with Singh's submission above.

1.9. Challenges of Website Adoption

The web being an internet-based application faces a lot of challenges in Nigeria as well as other developing countries. In Nigeria, the issue of hardware and bandwidth provision still remains a hard nut to crack. This and other factors are highlighted in Mungor (2015p.64)thus 'another major issue that seems to have plagued the ICT implementation in the university is the problem of bandwidth. The high cost of bandwidth, inadequate and unreliable telecommunication services and applications still remain a challenge. There is also the problem of insincerity on the part of service providers where many universities are made to pay for an amount of bandwidth that is never supplied to them.

Eze, Chinedu-Eze and Bello (2018) add that most universities are underfunded and therefore not enabled to sustain the infrastructure required for securing viable ICT facilities in the current ICT driven world. They continue that, inadequate internet facility; inadequate training of users to be up-to-date with advancements in technologies constitutes challenges to the deployment of ICT applications in universities. Mungor (2015) also agrees with the fact that most universities are grossly underfunded and therefore not enabled to sustain the infrastructure required for securing viable ICT facilities in the current ICT driven world. Aminu (2013) citing GESCI (2012) identifies infrastructure challenges and low computer literacy as hindrances to adoption of ICT....Infrastructure in GESCI's view refers to hardware or equipment, software applications and services associated with ICT including telecommunications and electricity grid networks .Consequently, low personal computer penetration and access to the internet...as well as challenge of electricity limit the adoption of ICT applications. Idowu and Esere (2013) also maintain that inadequate ICT infrastructure including computer hardware and software as well as bandwidth access is challenges. They also mention lack of qualified ICT personnel to support and manage the internet applications. Aside from bandwidth and infrastructural challenges, Mansoor and Hussein (2010) opine that making information and every other thing in the website easy to explore is a challenge that managers of website face. As Stoner (2019) notes, once a site is launched, it needs to be monitored and tweaked. A site is not just

launched but has to be kept up-to-date. From the foregoing, one can conclude that with such myriad of challenges, the optimal adoption and use of the website is still far-fetched in Nigerian universities.

2. Theoretical Framework

The following theories are adopted to provide a theoretical back up for this study; Technology Acceptance Model and Uses and Gratification Theory

2.1. Technology Acceptance Model: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The technology Acceptance model has been widely used when describing an individual or organization's acceptance of information systems. Batta (2019) citing Lai (2017) posits that that Technology acceptance model was introduced in 1986 by Fred Davis. The theory according to her, attempts to help researchers and practitioners distinguish why a particular technology or system may be acceptable or unacceptable. The model further assumes that an individual's acceptance of information systems is determined by two major variables namely perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Elaborating perceived usefulness entails the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would lead to enhanced job performance. On the other hand, Perceived Ease of use describes the degree to which technology users believe that their least effort is required while using technologies.

2.2. Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory is credited primarily to a renowned researcher of communications, Professor Jay Blumler and sociologist Elihu Katz in the 1970s even though it's made its first appearance in 1940. Its purpose is to explain how and why people use media. Research to support the theory is conducted largely through surveys and questionnaires, by which media users self-report their gratifications. Uses and Gratifications Theory represents a radical departure from Hypodermic Needle Theory, which assumes audiences directly yield to the media's influence.According to the theory, media users actively select the types of media and media content they consume to gratify various psychological needs. The theory is based on the following basic assumptions;

- The audience takes an active role in selecting a medium, as well as interpreting it and integrating it into their lives.
- Different types of media compete against each other and against other sources of gratification for viewers' attention.
- The medium that provides the most satisfaction for a person will be used more often than other types.

The same or different forms of media or their contents can satisfy different needs of consumers while developmental maturity, personality, background, class and social roles, etc. determine the types of needs media users have. The media through their contents provide a basis for social interaction or substitute for real companionship and strengthen biases or enable consumers to empathize with others while also solidifying social roles or motivate people to question them. The media is noted in their role as helping people become more knowledgeable about the world around them or allow them to escape it (Folarin, 2006).

Since staff of the University of Uyo, have different needs and reasons for using the institution's website, this theory will be useful in explaining the gratifications they derive from using such branded web page.

3. Methodology

The survey research method was adjudged suitable for this study because of its innate capacity to generate reliable information, opinions, attitudes and perceptions from a large number of people on an issue of interest without bias.

In line with the suggestion of Wimmer and Dominick (2011)that survey gives the researcher the opportunity of studying a population too large for direct observation, the use of this research method will afford the researcher first contact with respondents and allow the respondents answer questions posed by the researcher directly on the use of websites.

The population of this study was the academic staff of the university totaling one thousand and thirty-five (1035). This information is made available from the Academic Staff Union of Universities, University of Uyo Branch Check off Journal, 2019. Twenty percent (20%)of the population was used for the study. This resulted in 208 as the sample size chosen for study.

The data for the study were collected using the questionnaire which was self-administered during one of the general meetings of the academic staff and subsequently in offices to make up the desired number of the respondents. Twelve copies were found unusable for analysis leaving one hundred and ninety-six (196) useful copies which were analysed using frequency tables. The explanation building technique was also adopted to provide answers to the research questions.

4. Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

Responses	Frequency (%)
Yes	176 (90)
No	20 (10)
Total	196 (100)

Table 1: Extent of Awareness of the Uniuyo.Edu.Ng

Table 1 reveals that majority of the respondents are aware of the existence of the university website *uniuyo.edu.ng*

Responses	Frequency(%)
Yes	108 (55)
Not sure	64(33)
No	24(12)
Total	196 (100)

Table 2: Responses on Use of Website for Work Related Functions

Table 2 shows that many respondents used the website for work related functions while some could didn't use the website for the work-related functions or could not really place their use as work related.

Uses	Frequency of Responses	%
Receiving directives from management	28	10
Research	44	15
Sending of mails	68	23
News and advertisements from the University	68	23
Networking with other universities	40	13.5
Disseminating information on conferences and grants	28	9.4
University promotional services	20	7

Table 3: Responses on the Areas the University of Uyo Website Was Deployed for

It could be deduced from Table 3 that academic staff used the website most for sending of mails between colleagues as well as having access to news and advertisements. The website was also used by many for research and networking with other colleagues in other tertiary institutions. However, as can be observed from the responses, the extent to which these activities were carried out was low.

Responses	Frequency (%)
Great Extent	60(30)
Neutral	20(10)
Little extent	116(60)
Total	196(100)

Table 4: Responses on the Extent of Use of the
University Website by Academics

Table 4 shows that majority of the academic staff do not maximally use the website for their work functions.

Responses	Frequency	%
Provides staff and students with information	88	23
Contains information about university mission and goals	100	26
It is interactive and easy to use	20	5
It is a platform for news and information	48	13
It is always open for communication	28	7
It enhances University's presence on the internet	64	17
It is accessible	36	9

Table 5: Academics' Perception of the Uniuyo Website

From Table 5, we see that academic staff perceived the website majorly as means where information about the vision and goals of the university were propagated. Moreover, as shown by the responses, the respondents attested to the fact that the website contained a lot of information that were useful to the staff and students of the university.

Item	Frequency(%)
Yes	100 (51)
No	28(14)
Cannot say	68(35)
Total	196(100)

Table 6: Responses on Whether the University Website Makes
Information Dissemination Easy

From Table 6, it can be seen that not very many respondents attested to the fact that the website made information dissemination easy

Item	Frequency(%)
High	84(41)
Low	84(43)
Cannot rate	28(14)
Total	196(100)

Table 7: Responses on the Level of Satisfaction with the Website

Table 7 shows that respondents were not overly satisfied with the workings of the university website.

Item	Frequency(%)	Percentage
Poor/ Unavailability of network	104	53
Low skills in computer	24	12
Inadequate knowledge of the workings of the website	36	18
Lack of current /updated information	44	22
Inadequate storage capacity of the website	28	14

Table 8: Responses on the Challenges Impeding Academics' Use of Uniuyo Website

As shown in table 8,poor /unavailability of network to use the website posed a challenge to many of the respondents. This was followed by lack of current/ updated information in adequate knowledge of the working of the website was another factor that affected many respondents. The factor that posed the least challenge to users was low skills in computer.

5. Discussion of Findings

5.1. Research Question 1: To What Extent Are Academic Staff of the University of Uyo Aware of the Existence of Uniuyo Website (www.uniuyo.edu.ng)?

Answer to this research question is provided by the data displayed on Table1. The data on Table 1 show that an overwhelming number of respondents, 90% have knowledge about the existence of the University of Uyo website, www.uniuyo.edu.org, while 20% denied knowledge of such website.

The finding shows that the Directorate of ICT of the University has done a good job by creating awareness on the existence of the website. The University has gone further in this direction by making it easy for its academic staff to have a password for the University based email and use of the website.

5.2. Research Question Two: What Functions Does the Website Serve?

The academic staffs allude to the various functions that the university website served from their responses. Data on table 3 show that academic staff used the website most for sending of mails between colleagues (23%)as well as having access to news and advertisements(23%). The website was also used by many for research (15%) and networking with other colleagues in other tertiary institutions (14%).From the table, the use of the institution's website for promotional service about the school was ranked least in frequency of occurrence with 7% of respondents only. However, as can be observed from the responses, the extent to which these activities were carried out were low which could be attributable to the challenges, users claimed limited their optimal use of the website.

The importance University of Uyo academics attach to using their website for research and networking with colleagues in other universities underscores Udousoro's (2014) view that the expansion of communication networks and emails has markedly enhanced the development of professional networks and online communities of practice by making it possible to reach across geographical boundaries and communities with someone or many people quickly and easily.

Ani and Ahiauzu (2008) had earlier submitted that members of an organization get information from the web pages in measures that are in tandem with their desires for knowledge on any subject matter that relates with their quest.

The findings also agree with the postulations of the uses and gratification theory that users of media or media tools envisage certain gratification upon usage of such media. As shown by the findings of this study, the staff of the University of Uyo, use their websites for various activities (as shown above) and this create for them some level of gratification.

5.3. Research Question 3: What is their Perception of the University Website

Answers to this research question is expressed in table five 5.The analyses of the respondents' views show that the website was majorly seen as a medium for the dissemination of various kinds of information ranging from those about university missions and goals, as well as other news and information for the staff and students' consumption. The website was also perceived as being interactive, easy to use, and always opens for communication and accessible. Moreover; respondents saw the website as helping to enhance the university's presence on the internet. This aligned with the University of Uyo ICT policy statement that the website will among other functions enhance the University's presence on the internet and broadens recognition for the University while strengthening its image. Singh's (2013) position that a user-friendly website was one that was accessible to all users among other features enhance usability and made a website successful, is also buttressed by the findings of this study.

5.4. Research Question 4: What Challenges (If Any) Impede Their Optimal Use of the University Website for Their Corporate Functions?

Academic staff of the University of Uyo actually faced certain challenges. As shown in table 8, poor /unavailability of network to use the website posed a challenge to many of the respondents. This was followed by lack of current/ updated information. Inadequate knowledge of the working of the website was another factor that affected many respondents. The factor that posed the least challenge to users was low skills in computer. The findings here confirm several scholars' position on the challenges to ICT use. Eze et al (2018), Aminu(2013) as well as Idowu and Esere(2013) had found inadequate internet facility as well as inadequate training of users to be up up-to-date with advancements in technologies as factors that challenge ICT use. Stoner (2019) had also advised that a website needs to be updated regularly. The challenge of inadequate knowledge of the workings of the website and low skills were also found by Eze et al and Olofin and Aniede (2015).These findings are also buttressed by the data on Table 7 which showed that the academic staff of the university was not very satisfied with the university website. Therefore managers of www.uniuyo.edu.ng have a responsibility to put in place modalities that will ensure that the challenges highlighted in this study are addressed so that users can be satisfied with the University website.

6. Conclusion

Technology has played an important role in improving and expanding education worldwide.The website is one part of technology which has helped institutions to share and advertise their profiles and activities cheaply and easily.The university of Uyo has keyed into this development by establishing a website which according to the University's ICT policy serves to provide staff and students with necessary information, enhance the university presence on the internet as well as enhance the quality of the website through publishing of current and informative content in an acceptable web manner. This ICT infrastructure will ultimately help the university achieve its mission which is to diligently pursue scholarship and deploy. its output for human capacity development and economic growth in society with active participation in information and communication technology, sensitivity to Nigeria's cultural heritage and responsiveness to global environmental changes.

It therefore became necessary to appraise users' (teaching staff) knowledge, level of use as well as perceptions about the website. The study has revealed that users have a wide knowledge about the website and perceive it to be accessible, interactive and a means of providing the university with a reliable means of disseminating information and showcasing the university to the outside world thereby improving its ranking. The website, also in their view helps the university in its promotional activities. However, as the study found, more still needs to be done to make users of the website satisfied with its operations by providing adequate ICT infrastructure and providing current update on the website as well as offering training programmes for users of the website.

7. Recommendations

Arising from the study, the following recommendations are provided

- Employees of the University should be encouraged to develop their personal interest in the area of Information and Communication Technologies since the world has moved farer from analogue to digital communication where information sharing takes faster dimension on the world web routes.
- The websites should be developed to also contain features that are interesting to users and also contain information that mostly pertain to staff information needs as this will increase their passion and prompt their reasons to visit the sites.
- The ICT directorate should through the management lies with service providers for uninterrupted internet network for optimal use of the website.
- The ICT directorate should organise training/refresher courses for the academic staff of the University to boost their skills in computer as well as web surfing.
- University of Uyo ICT directorate should ensure that clear and timely information are put up in the website in line with its ICT policy statement.

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