

# **Publishing and Librarianship: The Nigerian Experience**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The history of publishing in Nigeria, relationship between publishing and librarianship in a digitized environment, publishing and copyright law and problems of publishing industry have been examined. The role played by missionaries in establishment of printing and publishing houses in Nigeria were also discussed. It is an established fact that before the invention of printing, books were labouriously copied by hand. However, it was observed that the emergence of desktop and digital publishing have greatly improved the quality of books and other reading materials produced in Nigeria. The paper recommends that government at all levels should give adequate financial and infrastructural support to publishers and libraries in Nigeria to enable them meet the challenges.*

**KEYWORDS:** Publishing, Librarianship Relationship, Digitized Environment, Challenges.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Publishing in Nigeria has developed greatly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to cater for the interested quest for knowledge. It represents one of the landmarks in human history whose importance can hardly be overestimated. Publishing has made possible the spread of knowledge and ideas. It has opened the world of books to a far wider audience (Aniebo, 2009). Imagine what librarianship world would have looked like if libraries were still in their ancient form of clay and tablets, parchment, scroll and rolls.

Hornby (2006) defines publishing as the profession or business of preparing and printing books, magazines and CD-ROMs for sell or making them available to the public. Publishing is the process of commissioning, producing and distributing of books, periodicals and newspapers. Akor (2010) also defines publishing as the process of producing for dissemination, books, films, computer programmes, records, newspapers, periodicals, discs, bulletins, magazines

and other literary materials. These materials can either be for free distribution or sale. Publishing promotes literary and national development through dissemination of knowledge.

## **HISTORY OF PUBLISHING IN NIGERIA**

The first printing press in Nigeria was established in Calabar in 1846 by Rev. Hope Waddell of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission. The press was used to print Bible lessons and later arithmetical books for schools (James, 2011). In 1854 another missionary based in Abeokuta, Rev. Henry Townsend of the Church of Missionary Society (CMS) established a press. Five years later, he used it to print the first newspaper in Nigeria "Iwe Irohin". From that effort grew what we know today as the CMS press, which has published thousands of books in Nigeria.

According to Ike (2004), the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1978 provides that at least 60% equity participation in book publishing must be by Nigerian nationals. With effect from that year, publishing in Nigeria became indigenous, making it unnecessary to distinguish any longer between indigenous and foreign publishing in the country. The foreign companies such as Oxford University Press, Longman, Macmillan, Heinemann, Evans etc. which dominate and still dominating the publishing scene in Nigeria reduced foreign equity participation to 40% or less. In recent times, the publishing houses have changed some of their names. For instance, University Press in place of Oxford University, Longman now answers Learn Africa. Publishing in Nigeria is essentially a private sector affair and because of the absence of pre-determined qualifications or conditions to be met, publishing is one of the most unregulated industries in Nigeria. The Federal Military Government made an unsuccessful attempt in the 1970s to set up a government publishing company. Some government agencies, State Ministries of Education and Professional Associations have played an active part in developing primary and secondary school textbooks, but they have generally done so in collaboration with publishing houses (Ike, 2004).

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLISHING AND LIBRARIANSHIP**

The introduction of printing 1450 A.D by John Gutenberg no doubt accelerated the pace of publishing and library development. Publishing is a hybrid of librarianship profession. Bassey (2002) states that the relationship between publishing and librarianship is that the books librarians acquire and make available to readers emanate from publishing houses all over the world. Publishing is the life blood of librarianship hence symbiotic relationship has always existed between the two inseparable partners. Libraries need information materials to satisfy the needs of users while the publishing produce these materials. Precious manuscripts of the past formerly copied labouriously one at a time by hand can now be produced in multiple copies and passed on to consumers through libraries. Libraries represent a formidable market for book industry. The thirst for knowledge can only be satisfied by the printed world-books, periodicals which are available in libraries, bookshops and the Internet.

Librarianship is global in context and perspective. It is one of the earliest professions that evolved with discovery of writing and paper. Librarianship is indisputably one of the world's earliest professions ranking on the same pedestal with Priesthood, Medicine, law and Accountancy (Dada, 2011). Librarianship is particularly in a great ferment and the profession is daily undergoing various changes and fundamental transformations. Librarianship profession is dynamic and ever changing in the face of 21<sup>st</sup> century publishing challenges. As publishing houses expand, so are the library resources growing correspondingly by leaps and bounds.

## **PUBLISHING IN THE DIGITIZED ENVIRONMENT**

In the past, publishing materials were physical matters as books, newspapers, journals, and was published in a tangible form. Although copying such materials and recording music on tapes was time consuming which many occasions lead to copyright infringement. According to Clarke (1999), the electronic or digital environment has the capacity for the following:

- Convenient and inexpensive creation of new data objects in digital form.
- conversion of existing materials into digital objects.
- near costless replicas of data objects at immeasurably low marginal costs.
- inexpensive and widespread access to data objects from a variety of devices such as mobile phones, web enabled TV etc.
- convenient manipulation of data objects.

The Internet or the Web has made publishing an easy matter. It has facilitated information dissemination. The moment information is published on the Internet; it becomes instantly available to millions of people all over the world (Moahi, 2004). For individuals and scholars, who want exposure for their work, this is indeed a very welcome development. However, for publishers who have a profit or revenue in their publications, it has posed a significant problem. The publishers worry about their returns, where materials and controlling access through the use of password and encryption and Internet protocol (IP) recognition.

This has created a problem for both information owners (publishers) and the information users. The easy distribution and availability of materials on the Internet means that the economic returns of the works produced by publishers would be severely curtailed because once the materials are available digitally, illegal copying and distribution becomes easy. On the other hand, the users worry is that the content owners would want to take measures to curtail access to information as is being done now through licensing agreements, and the use of Digital Rights Management Systems (DRMS), thus affecting freedom of information in the digital era.

## **PUBLISHING AND COPYRIGHT LAW**

Copyright basically refers to the rights of owners to protect their expressions such as works of literary, dramatic, musical artists or cinematographic nature (Clarke, 1999). Copyright is a way to protect an author's original work from misuse. The owner or the producer has the exclusive right to reproduce it, make derivative works from it, perform and display it publically and use almost any other means to present it such as play or movie (Unegbu, Orakpor, Anaduaka and Nkamnebe, 2011). Copyright protects the expression of ideas and not the ideas themselves. Copyright infringement occurs when a substantial part of a book or work is reproduced without the owner's permission; it is used for economic gain. Ideally, an individual's use of other's work must either acknowledge the fact and/ or also seek the owner's permission.

Over the years, copyright owners all over the world and in Nigeria have implemented technical and legal means of protecting their work from what the term "unauthorised use". Copyright owners have pointed out the relative ease that technology gives to users to make copies cut and paste has the effect of jeopardizing the owner's economic interest and gains. Protection of digital work has been facilitating by the use of digital right management (DRM) technologies. DRM is a collective name for technologies that prevent one from using a copyrighted digital work beyond the degree to which the copyright owners wish to allow one use it. DRM ensures that works such as documents, objects, computer software and database can be subjected to access control measures such as passwords

to unscramble encrypted works and licensing agreements. This means that digital materials can only be accessed through facilitates such as logging in and providing passwords or through the recognition of the Internet Protocol (IP) address of the computer user will be utilizing to gain access or through the use of access cards.

The use of such technologies enables the copyright owners to use technology that grants certain rights to the users and prevent certain usage of the copyrighted work. DRM allows monitoring and control of how such materials are used, putting copyright owners in control of their works even as they charge user for it. DRM is of two kinds-digital markings and encryption. Digital marking may be simple labels that attach rights information to content, or watermarks that typically hide information that can be used to identify a work while encryption involves scrambling content, so that those who have no authorization in the form of a code or password cannot decipher the content.

Another measure used to control access and use of copyright materials is the signing of licensing agreement between the owners and users of knowledge. To protect their economic earnings, publishers and copyright owners have turned to the use of contract law by enforcing the signing of licensing agreement as a prelude to gaining permission to use copyrighted works. Copyright owners end up dictating terms of use to the content users. They dictate who may use such information, who may have access to it, how long they can use it, whether it can be translated or repackaged etc. Licensing therefore affects fair use, first sale and public lending rights especially for libraries and information centres.

## **CHALLENGES OF PUBLISHING IN NIGERIA**

The following challenges are facing the publishing industries in Nigeria.

**1. Lack of a Marketing Programme:** There is the problem of information on books published in Nigeria. The main challenge facing the publishing industry in Nigeria was the dearth of information on what's being produced. Lack of reliable data on a number of titles published annually in different categories is also one of the factors that are not helping the industry to advance for a larger share of the market in educational books. If books sellers and buyers are not aware of the existence of a particular book, how can such a book be stocked and bought. The Internet which is now been used widely in developed countries to advertise and sell books is still a luxury item which is out of reach of the majority in Nigeria.

**2. Standard Production:** It is no longer news that publishers in Nigeria have resorted to the use of low-grade materials instead of high grade materials in book production while editorial and design proficiency have declined drastically due to inadequate training facilities. There are now many instances of book published in the country, even those produced by some of the major publishing houses, where pages are not straight and are smudged with large blobs or ink. Uneven print density and print images, barely legible half tones, poor finishing/binding and various other production flaws are now common in Nigeria. The majority of books produced in the country do not meet international acceptable standards in physical and visual quality or in the quality of content (Ifaturoti, 1997).

**3. Book Reading Culture:** Atinmo (1998) traces the culture and linguistics factors responsible for lack of reading for leisure among the neo-literates. She attributed the poor reading habits of such people to the entrenched oral forms of social communication and noted that even such people wanted to read, it would be difficult for publishers to meet the reading materials needs of small populations whose local languages might not exist in written forms. Adegoke (2001), observes that the majority of people who are literate hardly read for pleasure. For instance, students tend to read just to pass their examinations, many hardly read books outside their disciplines. Nigerian graduates of all levels are often not really information literate and/or sophisticated.

**4. Piracy and Copyright in the Electronic Age:** Echebiri (2005) says there is an alarming growth of book pirates in Nigeria. He went ahead to say that Nigeria book pirates are even now known to employ sales representatives of their own and often times succeed in selling books to and often times unsuspecting or wilfully colluding school officials. Okwilagwe (2001) opines that books are not adequately available for purchase in Nigeria and that is the genesis of book piracy and photocopying activities in Nigeria.

**5. Lack of Adequate Facilities:** Efficient and regular power supply, good road network is essential for publishing activities. Incidentally and quite unfortunate, publishing companies, paper mills and allied organizations suffer from erratic power supply. Publishing industries will continue to suffer a great deal as long as these facilities continue to create obstacles to its competition with foreign publishers. Nigeria Operates open market system and publishing industry is included, thus indigenous publishers are competing with their foreign counterparts which enjoy comparative advantage over the former. These advantages tend to weaken the basic facilities and the know-how to effectively find their feet in the industry.

## **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Publishing and Librarianship are two inseparable umbilical cords. The information materials needed in the library are produced by the publishers. This has led to the development of different types of libraries-school, public, special, national, and academic. To ensure that publishing houses in Nigeria are relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the following are recommendations are made.

1. The infrastructure in Nigeria should be developed to the level required to sustain the publishing houses. Government and policy makers in this country should be putting in place an environment to enable their local publishing industries recover from the recession.
2. Many of the established publishing houses in Nigeria should turn to the new technologies on the Internet for their publications. It is unwise to wait for one to twelve months for a book to be published. This undue delay can lead many to self-publishing since it is easy to publish on the web without delay.
3. There is high need to regularly organize book expositions and reading campaigns. Government in Nigeria should create favourable publishing atmosphere which will impact meaningfully on book development. Financial support should also be given to publishers.
4. Librarians should maintain the ethics of profession by ensuring that information privacy and security of users is protected.
5. Original owners of works, agents and publishers as well as librarians should have forum or a platform for safeguarding and disseminating electronic information resources.

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