JSTOR DIGITIZATION PROJECT IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: POLICY ISSUES IN BUILDING AND SUSTAINING DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

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Introduction

- ITHAKA (JSTOR) initiated a pilot digitization project in 2010, collaborating with two Nigerian universities, Bayero University, Kano (BUK) and University of Ibadan (UI).
- The collaboration involves the establishment of a digital lab in each of the university libraries.
The sequence of the project involves basically three phases:

- Planning: strategic meetings, signing of MOU and training
- Selection and assessment of materials, infrastructure, provision of equipment and hardware, and generation of metadata.
- Follow-up by Decopod, publishing digital output at institutions, project evaluation, writing preliminary report and submission of final report.
December 2011 or before was the expected date of completion with costs not exceeding $4050 to be borne by ITHAKA.

Both institutions have selected materials and commenced digitization with progress at different rates.

Both are well behind schedule. BUK’s completion target for metadata generation was February end 2013. UI’s completion target was June 2013.
What follows after the completion will be guided by the MOU.

This paper aims to examine:

- The objectives of this project as articulated in the MOU
- The generation and management of “the selected materials”.
- The technology system deployed to execute the project
- The policy issues
- The institutional capacity building potential of the project.
The general objective of the project according ITHAKA was:

- To conduct a pilot digitization project at BUK and UI
- To make these materials available online for the scholarly community in Africa and worldwide.
- To enable the libraries digitize and provide metadata for the selected materials.
The key element is the MOU that constitutes the understanding of the terms agreed to by the parties. The MOU defines the purpose of the project, rights and obligations of the parties involved, in terms of:

- Selection of materials
- Standard for creating metadata (Dublin Core)
- Use of guidelines for quality and fidelity
- Conditions for establishing the digital lab
- Limit to responsibility for staff salaries
- Custody of digital materials.
- Use, reproduction and distribution of materials (by ITHAKA).
- Ownership of copyright interest in selected and digital materials.
- Conditions and terms of use of such materials with copyrights.
Grant of non-exclusive, worldwide, perpetual, royalty-free license to ITHAKA:

- To create, archive, distribute the digital material to authorized users of JSTOR for non-profit educational purposes.
- To make copies for protection against data loss.
- To modify/adapt digital material without content/context change only as necessary for translation, preservation, delivery technologies.
These issues constitute the terms of the MOU signed by the parties involved.

Two implicit assumptions in the MOU

- No violation of, or non-compliance with, any terms of the MOU
- Nothing would warrant any need for amendment to, or review of, the MOU.
- Relationship based on mutual respect/trust.
- MOU does not make provision for violation, nor for expansion of its scope.
Each institution’s library was:

- To select materials to be digitized based on historical or cultural significance.
- To create metadata in a spreadsheet for each batch of documents.

BUK selected works mostly written as a result of Sokoto (Fulani) Jihad (1804–1810).
The works, mostly written in Arabic, were on various subjects including:

- Religious sciences
- Jurisprudence
- Politics
- Economics
- Philosophy
- Poetry, etc.
The selection decision in the UI was based on materials from:

- Influential individuals, prominent historical figures in the nationalist movement, mostly from the south-west.
- Old UI’s Journals, letters, books dating back to 1950s.

In both cases:

- many of the materials were fragile and brittle
- had to be preserved/treated before digitization.
In both cases, staff were designated:

- Project managers
- Content experts
- Translators (Arabic to English) in BUK.
- System staff
- System Librarians
The digital laboratory Technology system

- The wisdom in establishing the two labs.
  - BUK to serve Northern Nigeria
  - UI to serve Southern Nigeria

- Requirements to set up the labs:
  - Clean and safe space
  - Access to electricity
The Decapod technology deployed was:

- “Extremely cost-effective” (Decapod)
- Capable of producing a paper–to–digital document solution
- Highly automated
- Of low operator interaction (apart from page turning)
Problems areas it addresses:

- Allows camera based capture of bound materials to produce flat, clean page images (as flat bed scanner)
- No need for extensive operator interaction in the capture process
- Reduced user intervention in the conversion process.
- PDF/A outputs visually faithful to original, searchable & widely usable.
- Allows viewable output on mobile devices with PDF reflow support.
- No need for deep software, hardware or digitization skills
No capital cost barriers – consumer grade cameras
Reduced operational cost barriers operated with minimal training/commitment.

- BUK had no existing digitization project.
- UI had MacArthur–funded project with 100,000 pages already scanned.
Both libraries made provision for the digital lab.

- Power sources – off the national grid
- Alternative: inverters, UPS, diesel generators, solar panel arrays.

Delivery and set up of equipment

- Hardware scanning rig.
  - Standard tripod
  - Consumer digital camera (12 megapixels, 300 dpi gray scale)
Work flow software (3-step) drives the application software
- Capturing
- Software editing
- Generating PDF

Equipment application
- The two libraries have digitized their selected materials
- They have made progress in generating metadata
The project’s vision

- Immediate/short-term: digitization of selected materials
- Long-term: unlimited digitization expansion.

Dimensions of Long-term expansion

- Internal dimensions
- External dimensions
Policy Issues to take the same dimensions:

- Define the internal dimensions
  - New management challenges – sustainability (funding, etc).
  - Internally digitizable materials
  - Equipment maintenance
  - Service delivery

- Define the external dimensions
  - How to extend the Labs capabilities
  - What institutions, organizations – public, private?
• Under what conditions, terms
• Types of materials to be involved, etc.

Possible institutions to direct policy instrument

- History and culture bureaus
- Archives and Museums
- Health institutions
- Research institutions
- Universities, other learning institutions (federal, State, Private)
Government Ministries, departments and Agencies
Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
Organized Private sector.
Entertainment Industry (Film, Video and Music Producing bodies)
Publishing Industry
Electronic Media.

The list may not be exhaustive – each Lab sets its Limit
Details and Specifics of relationship are articulated:

- On bilateral, case-by-case basis.
- Within the context of general policy frameworks of each Lab.

Development of “Action Instruments” for implementation

- Information gathering about the institutions/ organizations
- Information, analysis
- Consultation
Practical need for mechanisms – an institutional committee each:

- To address implementation
  - Set clear goals/Objectives based on JSTOR’s Objectives
  - Draw up strategies to achieve the objectives

Committees’ terms of reference:

- Identification of Key issues/problems in the Policy environs – institutions, digitization needs, etc.
- Policy formulation with clear vision, goals, objectives, & strategies for implementation
- Policy implementation – MOU (where applicable).
- Policy analysis, Monitoring & review.

Faithful policy implementation will ensure institutional digital capacity building and sustenance & expansion.
Conclusion

- JSTOR’s initiatives, supported by MacArthur Foundation had a vision.
  - Short-term to achieve digital capacity in the two institutions.
  - Long-term to achieve digital capacity in Nigeria and beyond.
- Articulated Policy is one best way to ensure sustainability & expansion of the Project.
Thank you!