<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author 1</td>
<td>OKOYE, M. O.</td>
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<td>Author 2</td>
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<td>Author 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keywords</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Signature**

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DN: CN = Arinze Ojionuka, C = NG, O = University of Nigeria, OU = Innovation Centre
Reason: I have reviewed this document
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GATEWAY LIBRARY JOURNAL
Journal of the Ogun State chapter of the Nigerian Library Association

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Editorial

The Editorial Board regrets the delay in the publication of the second issue of the Gateway Library Journal. This was due to some unanticipated production problems. Now that we have cleared these problems, we wish to assure our subscribers of regular publication of the journal. We also wish to appeal to librarians, archivists and information scientists to send their manuscripts for consideration by the journal.

In this issue of the Gateway Library Journal, we have seven articles on different aspects of library and information science as well as records management. This first paper by Okoye discusses the different library software available for use in Nigerian university libraries. Mrs. Ifidon studied the challenges and frustrations of collection development in Nigerian university libraries and came up with some useful recommendations.

In two different articles, Adelani and Osinulu looked at the use of the libraries of the College of Education, Abeokuta and Ogun State University, Ago Iwoye respectively. Similarly, Oduwole studied the information seeking habits and needs of medical officers in some Nigerian university teaching hospitals. Abioye and Popoola in their own paper tackled record management in Oyo State judiciary. Finally, Adebisi in his article examined the relevance of the Internet to Nigerian libraries.
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M. O. Okoye</td>
<td>Selecting Suitable Software for Nigerian University Libraries</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.I. Ifidon (Mrs.)</td>
<td>The Challenges and Frustrations of Developing Research Collections in Nigerian University Libraries</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Library Use and Sandwich Students in a College of Education</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. F Osinulu (Mrs.)</td>
<td>Library Use in Ogun State University: A Survey</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. A. Abioye and O. O. Popoola</td>
<td>Records Management of a Typical State Judiciary in Nigeria</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SELECTING SUITABLE SOFTWARE FOR NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

M. O. Okoye
Principal Librarian
University Library,
University of Nigeria,
Nsukka.

Abstract

The paper discusses criteria for evaluating library software. It compares three types of software which are popular in Nigerian libraries. Suggestions are proffered on how to get the best out of each of the three software.

Introduction

Software is defined as the programs, procedures, routines and possibly, documents associated with the operation of a data processing system. It also includes all the non-hardware components of certain information systems, e.g. the tapes and documents associated with complex soft-teaching system (Longley & Shain, 1986).

Selecting software for a particular application is not always easy. Many more packages have come into the Nigerian market since the introduction of TINLIB software. These programs take account of the specific requirements of the market. They may, for example provide "ready-made" fields for ISBN, etc. e.g. TINLIB. Some programs are provided in modules for specific applications that can be bought as required, but which allow data to be transferred from one module to another as required.

The standard business software spread sheets, word processors etc. have a place in the library. Owing to the high cost of many of the modular library-specific packages, these business programs have more appeal for smaller library.

Software may be incompatible with a set of routines. This is usually in the sense that the program is too elaborate for the particular application. The method by which records are accessed in a database is another point of concern. If fast access is required (for circulation control, for example) sequential or indexed sequential access methods will be too slow. An inverted file structure will be more appropriate for such a task. Areas such as cataloguing (but not the on-line catalogue) where instant file access is less important
may be sufficiently well served by sequential or indexed sequential methods (Burton & Petrie, 1991).

**Sources of Information for Selection**

Sources of information for selecting software for library operations include (a) Advertisement and reviews. (Advertisements can be followed up by a request for literature, which may not be totally objective. Advertising claims can be balanced by journal reviews). (b) Paying a visit to computer stores; (c) Discussion with software owners. (Buffington, 1983).

Applications software can be obtained from three principal sources. It can be (a) bought off-the-shelf (and used with or without modification); (b) commissioned from a software house; and (c) written in-house, either by a member of staff or by available computer staff.

Each of the options has its merits and demerits. However, off-the-shelf software is readily available for all library routines.

**Software Assessment**

For a software to be adjudged suitable, it should have requirements of memory, disk storage, search facilities, print formats, sort facilities, program utilities incorporated, to name but a few. Others features that should be considered are:

(a) **Software supplier:**

One should deal with suppliers that have local or national reputation. This may ensure quality of the software support and training which will be available. It will obviously be necessary to establish with the supplier precisely what level of technical support will be offered and at what cost (Matthews, 1986). Inquiry on any after-sales service beyond a back-up copy of the disk should be made. In most cases, support will include advice, free or reduced-cost updates to the program as they are issued, and some degree of operator training. Suppliers also include installation of the software and a preliminary check that it is working properly. However, a comprehensive service will be an additional and ongoing cost. Training on the use of the program will obviously be more useful if carried out on-site.

Single souring which is the buying of hardware and software from one supplier has many advantages. Also there is only one person to argue with when something goes wrong.
(b) **Software Demonstrations:**
This enables one to assess how user-friendly the program is and the overall ease with which the program can be used.

(c) **Documentation:**
This is the operations manual for the software. It should be clear and concise. It should provide step-by-step guidance for the non-technical first-time user as well as serving as a reference manual for the experienced operators.

(d) **User-Friendliness:**
This refers not only to the way in which instructions on the screen are presented, but also to the total interaction of the operator and the program. In summary, user-friendliness relates to:

1. Screen presentation of operating instructions
2. Error prevention and data recovery.
3. Information on what is happening.
4. Confirmation of action to be taken.
5. Instructions should be comprehensible. The software should display all the MENU Options allowed at any stage and should show how to implement them. MENUS should be easy to understand (Matthews, 1986).

(e) **Software integration:**
The ability to use data files of whatever sort with more than one program offers considerable flexibility, as well as saving time in re-keying the same or similar data. The development of integrated library-specific software provided in modules is very significant, since this allows records to be created and transferred from one module to another as required (Burton & Petrie, 1991).

**Comparison of Types of Software**
Three types of software have engaged the interest of Nigerian university libraries and librarians. They are TINLIB, X-LIB and CDS/ISIS.

TINLIB is an acronym, which means the Information Navigator Library software. It is the brain child of a computer analyst and a librarian. It was developed by IME (International Machines in England) and was introduced in Nigeria by BUSICON.

CDS/ISIS can be received from UNESCO at no cost. (Oketunji, 1998).

Table 1
Comparison of TINLIB, X-LIB and COS/ISIS Software

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARAMETERS</th>
<th>TINLIB</th>
<th>X-LIB</th>
<th>COS/ISIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Cost</td>
<td>£12,500</td>
<td>*No.5million</td>
<td>Can be received from UNESCO at no cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Oketunji, 1998)</td>
<td>(Omotosho, 1998)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) License</td>
<td>£375</td>
<td>No License needed</td>
<td>No license needed but registration with UNESCO is compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Oketunji, 1998)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Availability of maintenance Services.</td>
<td>Available (Adio, 1998)</td>
<td>Available but may not be immediately as required</td>
<td>Not yet available except by liaising with institutions that already have the software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Maintenance cost.</td>
<td>12½% of the original cost</td>
<td>Does not charge maintenance cost</td>
<td>This is expensive. The institution has either to write to one of COS/ISIS centres in Africa for solution or send one of her librarians to a COS/ISIS Conference where solutions to such problems are proffered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Training facility</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Available at RMRDC and overseas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Training fee</td>
<td>Built into purchase bargain</td>
<td>Relatively moderate at RMRDC</td>
<td>Capital intensive (Very expensive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Exchange of records with other Federal university libraries</td>
<td>Possible, since Federal university libraries use TINLIB software</td>
<td>Not possible for now because it is not used in Federal university libraries</td>
<td>Not possible for now because it is not used in Federal university libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) Determination of number of characters for elements.</td>
<td>Neither possible nor necessary since it is a customized applications software</td>
<td>Individual library management has to configure the system to meet her specific needs</td>
<td>Necessary and needs the attention of a computer scientist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Change of display format</td>
<td>Not possible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) Windows-based software</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) DOS operated software</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l) integrated/Individual modules</td>
<td>Integrates other library functions/modules</td>
<td>Integrates other library functions/modules</td>
<td>Cannot integrate other library functions/modules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Provision for cross references</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None but the field can be created</td>
<td>None but the field can be created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n) any other field not provided for data entry in any library Templates/modules.</td>
<td>Field cannot be created</td>
<td>Field can be created since it is programmable</td>
<td>Field can be created since it is programmable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(o) Display of bibliographic records in a similar way to traditional card catalogue used in a library.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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*Prices were as at October, 1998
Suggestions
It is speculated that T.300, an updated version of TINLIB V.270 will take care of the deficiencies of V.270. The software is still costly. It will be appreciated if TINLIB is made more affordable. It should also be windows-based and programmable. CDS/ISIS will be better appreciated if its updated version will integrate library modules. Training facilities and maintenance outfit should also be made easily available. X-LIB should also have a DOS (Disk Operating System) version. This will enable import and export of data among libraries.

Recommendations
It is recommended that support be given to X-LIB by the Federal Government. Since it is indigenous, the government will not expend foreign exchange for its purchase and maintenance. The programmer, the sales agent and the maintenance outfit are in Nigeria and can be easily contacted when necessary. The price and the moderate training fee make it attractive and affordable. Mass production and patronage of the software will help advance the country in information technology.

REFERENCES


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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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