

## Information Policy Frameworks and Their Implications for Library and Information Services in Nigeria

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### Abstract

The rapid expansion of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has transformed the global information landscape, making effective information policy frameworks essential for knowledge management, transparency, and national development. In Nigeria, establishing such frameworks is crucial for guiding the creation, access to, and dissemination of information, especially through libraries and information centres, which serve as vital institutions for education, research, and public enlightenment. This paper investigates the current state of information policy frameworks in Nigeria, analysing their effects on library and information services while emphasising the challenges that hinder their effective implementation. Findings show that Nigeria has developed several policy instruments, including the National ICT Policy, the Freedom of Information Act, the Open Data Policy, and various digital governance initiatives, aimed at promoting equitable access to information, technological innovation, and knowledge dissemination. These policies have influenced library services by encouraging the adoption of digital resources, electronic databases, and information literacy programmes, thus broadening access beyond physical library spaces. Libraries have also become key actors in fostering transparency, supporting academic research, and facilitating user engagement with digital information systems. Despite these opportunities, notable challenges hinder the effective implementation of information policies. Limited funding, inadequate ICT infrastructure, unreliable electricity, shortages of skilled personnel, weak policy enforcement, and digital access disparities have constrained libraries' capacity to fully achieve policy objectives. These challenges threaten the sustainability of digital services and impede equitable access to knowledge resources nationwide. To address these issues, this paper recommends increased government investment in library infrastructure, ongoing professional development for librarians, promotion of digital literacy and open access initiatives, improved policy coordination, and targeted efforts to narrow the digital divide. By adopting these strategies, Nigeria can strengthen its information policy environment, enabling libraries to serve as key facilitators of knowledge, innovation, and national development.

**Keywords:** Information Policy Frameworks, Library and Information Services, Nigeria.

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### Introduction

Information is a key resource for national development, knowledge creation, education, governance, and socio-economic progress. In today's information society, developing and implementing effective information policies is crucial to ensure information is properly generated, organised, accessed, shared, and preserved. Information policy broadly refers to the set of principles, laws, regulations, and strategies that oversee the creation, collection, organisation, dissemination, and utilisation of information. It includes

legal, technological, and administrative mechanisms that ensure the proper management of information resources while supporting fair access to knowledge. According to Ogbomo and Ogbomo (2019), information policies are vital in shaping the development of an information society because they establish the regulatory environment necessary for the effective use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Without suitable policies, the flow of information can become chaotic, limited, or poorly managed, restricting the benefits information can offer society. Information policy frameworks provide the guiding principles, regulations, and institutional structures that govern how information is managed within a country. These frameworks influence the accessibility, availability, and equitable distribution of information resources across sectors such as education, research, and governance.

In Nigeria, libraries and information centres serve as vital institutions that facilitate access to knowledge, support academic research, promote information literacy, and preserve cultural and intellectual heritage. However, the effectiveness of library and information services is largely determined by the nature and implementation of national information policies. Policies related to information access, digital governance, intellectual property, open data, information technology, and freedom of information collectively influence how libraries operate and how information professionals provide services to users. According to Adebisi and Ehoniyotan (2024), information and communication technologies (ICTs) have significantly transformed how information is generated, stored, and disseminated, thereby requiring appropriate policy frameworks to regulate these activities and ensure effective access to information resources. Despite several policy initiatives aimed at strengthening Nigeria's information environment, many challenges remain. Bamgbose, Ijiwoye, Abah, and Adeniran (2025) observe that the implementation of information access policies in Nigeria often encounters institutional resistance, limited public awareness, and administrative barriers. These include poor coordination among policy frameworks, insufficient funding for information institutions, inadequate infrastructure, low digital literacy levels, and the ongoing divide between urban and rural communities. Such challenges frequently hinder libraries and information centres from delivering modern, technology-driven services necessary in the digital age.

This paper contends that although Nigeria has made significant efforts to develop information policy frameworks, there is a need for stronger policy integration, more effective implementation, and greater recognition of the role of libraries within the national information ecosystem. It investigates key information policy frameworks in Nigeria and discusses their implications for the development and delivery of library and information services. The paper argues that enhancing these frameworks and aligning them with the evolving information needs of society will considerably improve libraries' capacity to support education, research, innovation, and sustainable national development. Through this analysis, the study aims to contribute to ongoing discussions on strengthening information governance and boosting the effectiveness of library and information services in Nigeria.

## **Overview of Information Policy Frameworks**

Information policy frameworks are the institutional, legal, and strategic structures that guide how information is managed, disseminated, and used within a society. In the modern knowledge economy, information is seen as a crucial resource that impacts governance, education, economic growth, and technological progress. As a result, governments and organisations develop information policy frameworks to control the flow of information, ensure fair access to knowledge, protect intellectual property, and encourage responsible use of information. These frameworks usually include legislative

measures, regulatory mechanisms, institutional duties, and technological standards that collectively shape national information systems.

Globally, the development of information policy frameworks has been largely shaped by the rapid expansion of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The rise of digital technologies has greatly transformed how information is created, stored, shared, and accessed. Consequently, governments and institutions have had to introduce policies that tackle emerging issues such as data protection, digital rights, cybersecurity, intellectual property, and open access to information. According to Ojukwu, Mutula, and Ochonogor (2022), the advancement of ICT has opened new opportunities for knowledge sharing while also raising concerns about information regulation, security, and equitable access. Effective information policy frameworks therefore offer the regulatory environment needed to maximise the benefits of digital technologies while reducing potential risks. Such frameworks typically consist of several interconnected components. One of the key components is legislation that controls access to information, exemplified by the Freedom of Information Act (2011). Many countries have adopted legal tools that guarantee citizens the right to access information from public bodies. These laws aim to promote transparency, accountability, and democratic governance. Bamgbose et al. (2025) emphasise that access-to-information policies play a vital role in strengthening democratic institutions by enabling citizens to scrutinise government activities and engage in policy processes. These laws also encourage public institutions to keep accurate records and enhance information management practices.

Another essential element of information policy frameworks is data protection and privacy regulation. This was established in the National Data Protection Regulation (2019). In the digital age, large amounts of personal and institutional data are collected and processed through various information systems. This has raised concerns about safeguarding sensitive information and the ethical use of digital data. Data protection policies, therefore, set out guidelines for collecting, storing, and processing personal data while ensuring that individuals' privacy rights are upheld. Sabo and Utulu (2023) emphasise that data protection regulations are increasingly becoming vital components of national information governance structures, particularly as digital platforms expand across different sectors of society.

Intellectual property regulation also plays a crucial role in information policy frameworks. Intellectual property laws, including copyright regulations, aim to protect the rights of authors, researchers, and creators by controlling the reproduction and distribution of their works. These laws help maintain a balance between safeguarding creators' rights and ensuring public access to knowledge resources. In the context of libraries and information services, intellectual property policies influence how information materials are acquired, reproduced, digitised, and shared among users. Ojukwu et al. (2022) explain that sustainable management of electronic resources in academic libraries requires clear policy frameworks that address copyright compliance, licensing agreements, and digital resource management.

Another crucial aspect of information policy frameworks is the development of ICT infrastructure and digital governance strategies. Governments often develop national ICT policies to foster technological innovation, enhance information access, and strengthen digital economies. These policies support the integration of ICT into various sectors such as education, healthcare, commerce, and public administration. Agbeyangi, Makinde, and Odun-Ayo (2024) note that ICT policies are essential for improving economic sustainability and driving digital transformation, especially in developing countries where technological infrastructure is still progressing. Such policies often include initiatives to expand broadband connectivity, support digital literacy programmes, and encourage the adoption of emerging technologies.

Information policy frameworks also address issues related to open access and the democratisation of knowledge. This was reflected in the Nigerian open data policy (2013). The open access movement has gained significant attention worldwide as researchers and policymakers advocate for unrestricted access to scholarly information. Open access policies promote the sharing of research outputs through institutional repositories, digital libraries, and open-access journals, thereby lowering barriers to information access. According to Aliyu, Musa, and Rabi (2024), open access initiatives have the potential to bridge knowledge gaps by making scholarly information more accessible to researchers, students, and professionals, particularly in developing countries where access to subscription-based databases may be limited.

Alongside legal and technological elements, information policy frameworks often include institutional arrangements that coordinate information-related activities across different sectors. Various government agencies, regulatory bodies, and professional organisations may be responsible for implementing and monitoring information policies. These institutions work collaboratively to ensure that policy objectives are achieved and that information resources are managed effectively.

The role of libraries within information policy frameworks cannot be overstated. Libraries act as vital intermediaries between information producers and users. They enable access to knowledge resources, support research and education, and safeguard cultural and intellectual heritage. Consequently, information policies directly influence libraries' operations and services. Odunlade and Ojo (2023) note that policy initiatives promoting digital transformation have encouraged libraries to adopt new technologies that improve information access and service delivery. These developments have led to the creation of digital repositories, online catalogues, and virtual reference services that extend library services beyond physical spaces.

### **Implications for Library and Information Services**

Information policy frameworks significantly impact the development and operation of library and information services. These frameworks shape the environment in which libraries function by setting rules and guidelines for access, management, dissemination, and preservation of information. In Nigeria, various information-related policies, such as those concerning access to information, ICT development, data protection, and intellectual property, influence how libraries organise their services and respond to the changing information needs of society. As information environments expand through digital technologies, libraries must adapt their services to align with national information policies and technological advances.

One key implication of information policy frameworks for library and information services is improved access to information. Policies that support open governance and transparency encourage libraries to expand their roles as gateways to knowledge. Libraries are increasingly expected to facilitate public access to government publications, research outputs, and educational resources. Access-to-information policies strengthen libraries' ability to provide users with reliable and authoritative information resources. Agwuna, Ibeh, and Mukokebe (2024) note that policies promoting access to public information contribute to greater transparency and accountability in governance, and libraries play an important role in supporting this aim by providing access points where citizens can obtain relevant information.

The growing integration of information and communication technologies into information management has transformed traditional library services into more technologically advanced systems, thus expanding

digital library offerings. Policies that encourage ICT adoption have prompted libraries to develop digital repositories, electronic catalogues, and online information services that enhance access to resources. According to Owate (2024), the digital transformation of academic libraries has improved service delivery by enabling remote access to resources and supporting online learning and research activities. These advancements have extended library services beyond physical locations and allowed libraries to reach a wider user community.

Information policy frameworks also shape the management of electronic information resources in libraries. Policies concerning intellectual property rights, licensing agreements, and digital information management determine how libraries acquire, organise, and disseminate electronic resources. Academic libraries, in particular, rely heavily on electronic databases, digital journals, and online research platforms to support teaching and research activities. Ojukwu et al. (2022) observe that sustainable management of electronic resources requires well-defined policy frameworks that guide the acquisition, licensing, and preservation of digital materials. These policies help ensure that libraries can provide legal and ethical access to information resources while respecting copyright regulations.

Moreover, information policy frameworks shape librarians' professional roles and skills. As information systems become more digital and technology-driven, librarians need to develop new skills to manage electronic information systems and emerging technologies. The increasing use of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and cloud computing has broadened the scope of information professionals' duties. Yusuf, Oshinaike, Suleiman, and Omoniyi (2025) highlight that modern librarians must acquire advanced technological skills and knowledge management expertise to effectively support digital information services. This change has led library schools and professional organisations to include ICT-related training in their educational programmes.

Information policy frameworks also help promote information literacy among library users. In the digital age, the vast amount of information available online makes it increasingly important for individuals to develop skills to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Libraries play a vital role in fostering information literacy by offering training programmes and educational resources to help users navigate complex information environments. Policies supporting digital education and ICT integration in academic institutions often motivate libraries to implement information literacy initiatives to enhance users' research and information management skills.

Another significant implication is the enhancement of collaboration and resource sharing among libraries and information institutions. Information policies that promote digital networking and open access initiatives create opportunities for libraries to work together in sharing their information resources. For example, academic libraries may join consortia that enable institutions to share access to electronic databases and digital collections. Such collaborative arrangements help lower the costs of acquiring information and improve access to scholarly resources for students and researchers. Aliyu, Musa, and Rabi (2024) argue that open access policies can reduce information inequality by making research outputs freely available to a broader audience.

### **Challenges Facing Libraries in Implementing Information Policies in Nigeria**

The implementation of information policy frameworks in Nigeria has significant implications for library and information services; however, several challenges hinder their effective realisation. This position paper argues that although the Nigerian government has developed various policies aimed at improving

information access, promoting digital transformation, and strengthening information governance, libraries often face structural, technological, financial, and administrative obstacles that limit their ability to implement these policies effectively. These challenges affect libraries' capacity to provide efficient information services and to fully participate in the national information infrastructure.

One of the most significant challenges confronting libraries in Nigeria is inadequate funding. The successful implementation of information policies requires substantial financial investment in infrastructure, technology, staff development, and resource acquisition. However, many libraries operate under limited budgets, which restrict their ability to acquire modern information technologies and digital resources. Insufficient funding also affects the maintenance of existing facilities and the acquisition of updated library materials. Studies have shown that inadequate financial resources are a major factor undermining the effective functioning of libraries in Nigeria, limiting their ability to meet the growing information needs of users (Sodiye, Amalahu, Uthman, & Safiriyu, 2024). In many cases, outdated equipment and inadequate library collections are direct consequences of poor funding allocations to library institutions.

Another significant challenge is inadequate technological infrastructure. Modern information policies emphasise the use of digital technologies for information storage, retrieval, and dissemination. However, many libraries in Nigeria lack the necessary ICT infrastructure to support digital information services. This includes insufficient computer systems, limited internet connectivity, outdated software, and inadequate digital storage facilities. According to Ajani, Olarongbe, Sulyman, and Isiaka (2024), without these technological resources, libraries struggle to implement policies related to digital libraries, institutional repositories, and electronic information systems.

Closely linked to infrastructural challenges is the issue of unreliable electricity supply. The successful deployment of digital information services heavily relies on a stable power source. Unfortunately, many Nigerian libraries frequently face power outages that disrupt digital operations and restrict access to electronic resources. These disruptions not only impair the functionality of digital systems but also discourage users from depending on library services for information. Consequently, the aims of information policies that encourage digital access to knowledge resources may not be fully achieved in environments where power supply remains unstable (Owate, 2024).

Another major challenge is the shortage of skilled personnel and inadequate professional training. Implementing information policy requires librarians to have advanced technological skills and expertise in areas such as digital information management, database administration, and electronic resource management. However, many librarians have limited opportunities for professional development and training in emerging information technologies (Bako & Odigie, 2024). The lack of ongoing training programmes often leaves library staff insufficiently prepared to effectively manage modern information systems. Studies have noted that a deficiency in technical expertise among librarians significantly contributes to the slow adoption of innovative technologies within Nigerian libraries.

Furthermore, poor policy coordination and fragmented governance structures often weaken the effectiveness of information policy implementation in Nigeria. Various government agencies and regulatory bodies may have overlapping responsibilities related to information governance, leading to inconsistencies in policy interpretation and enforcement. Such fragmentation can cause confusion among institutions responsible for implementing policies, including libraries and information centres. In some



cases, weak policy coherence and lack of coordination among stakeholders have led to inconsistent implementation of digital transformation initiatives within library systems.

Another challenge facing libraries is the low level of digital and information literacy among library users. Information policies that promote digital access assume that users possess the necessary skills to locate, evaluate, and utilise electronic information resources effectively. However, Obi and Obuah (2021) posits that many users lack adequate digital literacy skills required to navigate online information systems. This limitation reduces the effectiveness of digital library services and may discourage users from utilising available information resources (Bako, & Odigie, 2024). Libraries therefore face the additional responsibility of providing information literacy programmes aimed at improving users' ability to access and use digital information resources.

The digital divide between urban and rural areas also affects the implementation of information policies in Nigeria. While some urban institutions have relatively better access to ICT infrastructure, many rural communities remain underserved in terms of internet connectivity and technological resources. Libraries located in such areas face significant challenges in implementing digital information services due to limited infrastructure and inadequate government support. This disparity in technological access contributes to unequal access to information resources across different regions of the country (Aliyu, Musa, & Rabi, 2024).

Despite these challenges, libraries in Nigeria continue to play a vital role in promoting access to information and supporting educational development. I believe that tackling issues related to funding, infrastructure, professional training, and policy coordination will be crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of information policy implementation in the country.

### **Recommendations for Strengthening Information Policy and Library Services**

This paper argues that the effectiveness of information policy frameworks in Nigeria largely depends on their implementation and support from relevant institutions, especially libraries and information centres. While previous studies focus mainly on the government and educational sectors (Onyancha, 2020), it contends that to maximise the benefits of existing information policies, strategic actions must be taken by government agencies, educational institutions, professional bodies, and library administrators. The paper advocates that collaborative partnerships enhance the sharing of expertise, technological resources, and best practices in information management.

Adequate funding is crucial for the successful implementation of information policies and the modernisation of library services. This paper advocates for consistent funding by the library's establishing institution because financial resources are vital for acquiring up-to-date information materials, digital infrastructure, maintenance of technological systems, and staff training. Without sufficient financial investment, libraries may find it difficult to implement digital information systems and other initiatives promoted by national information policies (Krubu & Osawaru, 2020).

The development and expansion of ICT infrastructure within libraries depend on digital technologies for information storage, retrieval, and dissemination. This paper asserts that libraries must be equipped with adequate technological facilities such as computers, high-speed internet connectivity, digital repositories, and electronic cataloguing systems to effectively implement information policies that promote digital transformation. According to Odunlade and Ojo (2023), the integration of digital technologies in academic

libraries significantly improves service delivery and enhances access to scholarly information resources. Investments in ICT infrastructure will enable libraries to establish digital libraries, online databases, and institutional repositories that provide users with remote access to information resources.

There is a need for ongoing professional training and capacity building for librarians and information professionals. The rapid advancement of information technologies has transformed librarians' roles from traditional custodians of printed materials to information managers who manage complex digital systems. Librarians must therefore acquire competencies in areas such as digital information management, database administration, electronic resource management, and data analytics. Professional development programmes, workshops, and training opportunities should be organised regularly to equip librarians with the skills needed to operate modern information systems effectively. Yusuf et al. (2025) emphasise that librarians must develop new technological competencies to manage emerging information systems and support digital information services.

Furthermore, promoting open access initiatives and collaborative resource sharing among libraries should be encouraged. Such initiatives reduce the cost of accessing academic information and enhance the visibility of research produced within Nigerian institutions. Libraries can collaborate through digital consortia and institutional repositories to share electronic resources and expand access to information materials. Aliyu, Musa, and Rabi (2024) highlight that open access initiatives have the potential to reduce information inequality by providing broader access to scholarly knowledge.

The importance of promoting information literacy and digital literacy among library users cannot be overstated. As the volume of digital information grows, users need the skills to find, assess, and use information effectively. This paper argues that libraries should create comprehensive information literacy programmes that teach users how to search online databases, evaluate sources, and use digital resources responsibly. Such programmes will enable users to make full use of digital library services and help improve educational outcomes.

Finally, efforts should be made to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural communities. Many rural areas in Nigeria have limited access to internet connectivity and digital infrastructure, which restricts their ability to benefit from digital information services. This paper suggests that government policies should prioritise expanding broadband connectivity and technological infrastructure in underserved regions. Libraries located in rural communities should be equipped with ICT facilities that allow users to access digital information resources. Addressing the digital divide will ensure that information services are accessible to all citizens regardless of geographical location.

## Conclusion

Information policy frameworks are not merely administrative tools; they are the backbone of a knowledge-driven society. In Nigeria, these policies shape how information is produced, accessed, and managed, directly influencing the effectiveness of libraries and information services. As this paper has highlighted, well-formulated policies provide opportunities for digital transformation, open access, and equitable information distribution, positioning libraries as critical hubs for education, research, and national development. Yet, the persistent challenges ranging from inadequate funding, technological infrastructure, limited professional capacity and digital divide threaten to undermine these opportunities. The position of



this paper maintains that addressing these challenges is not optional; it is imperative. Strengthening library infrastructure, enhancing professional training, bridging the digital divide, and promoting policy awareness will empower libraries to fully implement information policies and serve their communities effectively. Libraries must be recognised not only as repositories of knowledge but as active agents of national progress, capable of transforming policy into tangible benefits for society. Ultimately, the success of Nigeria's information policy frameworks will be measured by how effectively they enable libraries to provide inclusive, equitable, and innovative information services. A nation that invests in its information infrastructure invests in its intellectual capital and, by extension, its future.

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