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### Integrative Review of Literature on Competitive Intelligence as a Catalyst for Enhanced and Electronic Library Service Delivery

Gelişmiş ve Elektronik Kütüphane Hizmeti Sunumu için Bir Katalizör Olarak Rekabetçi Zeka Üzerine Literatürün Bütünleştirici Gözden Geçirilmesi

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#### ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this paper was to improve the library's competitive position in the information world by providing electronic service delivery based on competitive intelligence skills that can serve users and their information needs. Competitive intelligence as a panacea for offering enhanced library services has been the subject of existing literature and since it is a current issue that has not received adequate representation in the literature, hence, making inferences based on the available document sources is the main goal of this review article. In the domain of library and information science, competitive intelligence focuses on the systematic and coordinated surveillance of competitors in a specific task or service delivery, wherever they may be. Library services are taking a new dimension in accordance with competitive intelligence standards and strategies. Traditional modes of information provision and delivery have given way to electronic and web-based information, according to a global trend. If not absolutely, physical collections are giving way to electronic or digital collections. Libraries are progressing in their alignment with ICT realities, primarily by automating library routines such as acquisition, information handling and management, charging and discharging, serials management, developing online catalogues and other retrieval aids, creating institutional repositories, developing library websites, and providing online information services, among other things, in order to achieve competitive intelligence over others in the information management value chain.

**Keywords:** *Competitive Intelligence, Electronic Library Services, Information and Communication Technology, Digital Libraries, Information Database*

#### ÖZET

Bu makalenin temel amacı, kullanıcılar ve onların bilgi ihtiyaçlarına hizmet edebilecek rekabetçi istihbarat becerilerine dayalı elektronik hizmet sunumu sağlayarak kütüphanenin bilgi dünyasındaki rekabetçi konumunu geliştirmektir. Gelişmiş kütüphane hizmetleri sunmak için önemli olan rekabetçi istihbarat, mevcut literatürün konusu olmuştur. Literatürde yeterli derecede yer almamakla beraber güncel bir konu olması nedeniyle, mevcut belge kaynaklarına dayalı çıkarımlar yapmak bu çalışmanın temel amacıdır. Kütüphane ve bilgi bilimi alanında, rekabetçi istihbarat, belirli bir görev veya hizmet sunumunda rakiplerin sistematik ve koordineli gözetimine odaklanır. Rekabetçi istihbarat standartları ve stratejilerine uygun olarak kütüphane hizmetleri yeni bir boyut kazanmaktadır. Küresel bir eğilime göre, geleneksel bilgi sağlama ve sunma biçimleri yerini elektronik ve web tabanlı bilgilere bırakmıştır. Fiziksel koleksiyonlar yerini elektronik veya dijital koleksiyonlara bırakmaktadır. Kütüphaneler, bilgi yönetimi değer zincirinde diğerlerine göre rekabetçi istihbarat elde etmek için, diğer şeylerin yanı sıra bilgi hizmetleri (öncelikle edinme, bilgi işleme ve yönetimi, ücretlendirme ve iade, süreli yayın yönetimi, çevrimiçi kataloglar ve diğer erişim yardımcıları geliştirme, kurumsal depolama alanları oluşturma, kütüphane web siteleri geliştirme ve çevrimiçi sağlama) gibi kütüphane rutinlerini otomatikleştirerek Bilişim Teknolojileri gerçekleriyle uyum içinde ilerlemektedirler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Rekabetçi İstihbarat, Elektronik Kütüphane Hizmetleri, Bilgi ve İletişim Teknolojisi, Dijital Kütüphaneler, Bilgi Veritabanı*

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## INTRODUCTION

Competitive intelligence as it relate to librarianship is the systematic and coordinated monitoring of competitors in a certain task or service delivery, wherever and wherever they may be. Competitors, on the other hand, are those information service providers who are seen as rivals or counterparts and with whom competition is likely. It also entails predicting what those competitor will do before such an action occurs, which will necessitate a variety of tactics at the tactical level, as well as the convergence of existing information infrastructure, analysis and distribution of information, and, of course, the calculation of decisions based on that information and its analysis. Gathering and analyzing information on rivals' activity and new trends is what competitive intelligence entails.

Competitive intelligence as a critical component of strategic planning and management is concerned with monitoring the competitive environment in order to give actionable intelligence that can help gain a competitive advantage. Similarly, Haliso and Aina (2012) define competitive intelligence in libraries as the intention to gather intelligence from other libraries and rivals, and use that knowledge to provide excellent services and be in a better position than competitors. Competitive Intelligence, however, entails the legal gathering of information on competitors and the general information environment. The information gathered from this is then used to improve one's own competitiveness. Competitive intelligence is a sort of knowledge management practice for sustainability of sort amidst stiff competition.

The delivery of effective information services that meet the needs of users, decision-makers' aspirations, and lifelong learners has long been a goal of the information profession. Information professionals, on the other hand, are compelled to help people by providing access to high-quality information resources in both print and electronic formats constituting hybrid information services (Yaya, Ochonna and Osisanwo 2014). Contemporary information service developments are based on the deployment of information technology as requested by today's Google generation set of users. However, competitive intelligence, which acts as a catalyst for electronic information service delivery, deserves more serious attention and strategy from library and information professionals because libraries are no longer constrained by physical structures, and librarians are no longer restricted to physical libraries. Many new challenges have emerged as a consequence of the evolving nature of the multidimensional, knowledge-based environment in which we actually live, and the learning of skilled information professionals must change to meet them. The goal of this article was to improve the library's competitive position in the information world by providing electronic service delivery based on competitive intelligence skills that can serve users and their information demands.

## Literature Review

The necessity for digital library services comes as a result of the increase of electronic information material and the growing workload associated with dealing with the information explosion while also keeping up with the ability to curate the ever-increasing digital information on the internet. With improved speed and accuracy, digital library services enable access to information regardless of where it is stored. Digital library services tend to answer long-standing library issues of financial constraint as well as the possibility to adapt to societal technological advancements. Networking and integrated information resource sharing across collaborating libraries further expand library consortia, allowing for greater access to huge information resources at a cheaper cost. One of the most important elements of the electronic library service delivery is an online search that allows users to access both bibliographic information and full-text documents once search terms and document descriptors (also known as metadata) match (McGinty, 2021). Information material collection, information processing on integrated library systems (ILS), and electronic transmission and circulation of digital information resources are all possible through online information search.

In libraries, electronic information service delivery includes networked information databases with digital content in various formats and several points of information entry. The endeavour to improve information services via the use of computers and information technology is a predecessor to the creation of digital library services. The internet, which allows browsing and navigation of information resources on websites and information databases, has brought the goal of digital library development to fulfillment (Abdussalam, Adewara, Abdulraheem, Oyedokun & Balogun, 2021). The distribution of library and information services is changing in today's world, from manual operations to groundbreaking technology alternatives. As a direct result of innovation technologies, there has been a paradigm shift in libraries and information services.

The internet, a collection of technologies, is used to provide services to patrons through proper channels for access to information using new technology and communication tools. In fact, the way libraries work has changed dramatically as a result of information technology (Ogar & Dishu, 2018). A rich collection, combined with a technology-driven information retrieval system and digital reference services, would result in increased user satisfaction and library patronage. The Library is the center of information service delivery. The nature of a library's collection will determine the quality of library's services to its patrons. Users will benefit from a well-stocked and updated library with electronic information resources and services. In terms of quantity, quality, and format, a balanced collection of resources that will meet and offer value to 21st-century users must be balanced. When the library collection is current and relevant to the needs of library users, it is said to be of high quality. In terms of content, expression, and format, a good collection should meet high standards.

Libraries that want to add value to their services should make their catalogs online and accessible via technology at all times and places. The Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) is one of such catalogue, allowing users to access the catalogue from anywhere and at any time over the internet. Libraries can get an advantage over their competitors by being innovative. Users can have unrestricted and unlimited access to the library owing to an interactive library catalogue that uses a web-based information service. This allows users to have quick and easy access to a variety of online library services and information (Jerome, Nkiko & Ifeakachuku, 2017). Friendster, LinkedIn, Myspace, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other social networking sites are new and effective ways of providing users with enhanced and easy services. It's a wonderful tool for marketing and announcing library services. Libraries can gain a competitive advantage by using social networking sites for selective dissemination of information (SDI), current awareness services (CAS), announcement of new arrival, and other services.

### **Competitive Intelligence as an Additional Skill Required of New Era Librarians**

Competitive intelligence is the purposeful generation and selective dissemination of knowledge gained from the acquisition, retrieval, and analysis of relevant information. By leveraging skills in online database searching, organizing and surrogating information, query negotiation, resource authentication, analysis of data, and information distribution. Effective intelligence gathering provides a competitive advantage. As a result, competitive intelligence might be considered a valuable addition to the knowledge and competencies required of a new era librarians (Ojo & Olaniyi, 2017).

However, library schools and educators engaging in curriculum development must address the requirement for competitive intelligence skills and knowledge in library education curriculum. This is significant since there are other skill sets that are not normally covered in the profession's curriculum. In library and information science (LIS) curricula, skills including benchmarking, product costing, technical forecasting, advanced database construction, and data mining techniques are rarely covered. There are also some cutting-edge new software applications that pose a hazard to the unwary while simultaneously providing opportunities for the observant. Traditionally, these programs have not been effectively taught as part of the library curriculum.

Competitive intelligence process is regarded as a sequence of processes that resulted in the creation of intelligence information or actionable recommendations based on circumstances and projections. Competitive intelligence has demonstrated to be an excellent means of reintroducing librarians to online searching and content review in a more focus strategy. There are numerous advantages to developing a competitive intelligence program of training. It has the potential to better integrate multiple components of the knowledge environment, foster excellence and creativity in teaching and learning through the utilization of cross-disciplinary, cross-functional content development teams, and strengthen librarianship

through greater diversity. The requirement to discover, evaluate, forecast, and recommend reactions to changing situations in a dynamic and discontinuous operating information environment is a common thread between competitive intelligence and librarianship (Boxen, Stephen & Pritchett, 2012).

Competitive intelligence shows an insight of how to use the Internet, intranets, and extranets strategically to gain a competitive advantage. It also introduces librarians to data warehousing and data mining tools and strategies for extracting additional value from legacy systems so as to attracting more users to the library. In information digging exercises, a variety of electronic and print resources are provided, reviewed, compared, and leveraged to provide more insights into elements that drive the query and effect results.

### **Methodology**

This is a qualitative research that relied on secondary data sources from Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ProQuest and other tertiary data sources. This study is a review article that serves as an overview of existing literature as well as an analysis of current ideas. Competitive intelligence as a panacea for offering enhanced library services has been the subject of existing literature and since it is a current issue that has not received adequate representation in the literature and previous research, hence, making inferences based on the available document sources is the main goal of this review article. After careful selection and a thorough analysis of the existing literature, twelve (12) documents were chosen as being eligible for the study.

### **Discussion**

In libraries, stakeholders are beginning to recognize the need and usefulness of competitive intelligence (Uzohue & Yaya. 2016). Competitive intelligence can be applied to all of library's functions and responsibilities, giving that they are ahead of competition when it comes to providing information services to users. In a similar vein, Haliso and Aina (2012) describe competitive strategy in libraries as the ability to seek information from other libraries, rivals and counterparts alike and then deploy such information to create excellent services to stay ahead of competition. Libraries that gather competitive intelligence are better prepared for future opportunities, challenges, and the possibility of surpassing their competitors by earning a competitive advantage.

The readiness of library and information professionals to embrace emerging changes is assisting the profession of library and information science in remaining relevant and valuable in the rapidly changing internet age. Competitive intelligence, on the other hand, can aid in driving innovation and creativity in the field of library and information science. Libraries prefer to stay up with the fast-changing information world by offering new technologies and creative services. Libraries are responsible for providing users with access to information, and they frequently utilize information and communication technology (ICT) to do just that. Library patrons expect librarians to offer information in real time and completely (Ailakhu & Kalu, 2017).

Libraries, like any other institution, are facing significant paradigm shifts as they attempt to fulfill their duties as key information providers to their users. Invasive and disruptive technologies, changing user needs, and alternative information sources that offer similar services to users are all affecting libraries. The library's predicament is clear, as seen by falling support and declining patronage. In order to maintain their position in the face of fierce competition, they must respond quickly. Librarians can't properly plan for the future or position themselves unless they understand their competition and what attracts users to them. As there are other sources of information attracting users' attention. To stay in business and gain a competitive edge, libraries must re-strategize and adopt a business-minded approach in the services they offer. Also, their response must be quick if they are to survive and remain relevant.

Libraries must re-strategize their services, perhaps migrating to electronic or digital library services that integrate competitive intelligence to stay relevant (Iwu-James, Haliso & Ifijeh, 2019). Electronic library services are a combination of services, information architecture, a set of information resources, information databases and a set of tools and capabilities for locating, retrieving, and using the information resources available, with a focus on digital content. Internet and online information providers, as well as information brokers are among the library competitors and libraries need to adopt new techniques and innovative strategies to provide dynamic information services capable of meeting a wide range of user needs in order to stay ahead of the competition. This is particularly important in the information value chain, where the working environment is getting more complex and competitive. Competitive intelligence is clearly a strategic activity that is directly linked to and also serves as an impetus for the library's use of electronic information services that serve the need of even remote users of the library.

The digital transformation age is primarily leading to an increase in the importance and acceptance of information and communication technology. As a result, libraries are becoming increasingly reliant on electronic or digital services to assure swift response to changes and so remain competitive. Then, with trustworthy information and analytical insights, competitive intelligence delivers technology tools to help decision-making processes. Through intelligence information, librarians can become wiser, work smarter, and make better decisions (Hamad, Al-Aamr, Abdel-Jabbar & Fakhuri, 2020).

Because the professional work environment of information handling and management is becoming more complex and competitive, libraries must adapt quickly to changes in their external environment. Moreover, due to library competitors' use of innovation and creativity in fulfilling users' diverse information demands, librarians must raise their efforts in ensuring unrestricted access to information to enjoy more patronage. Library services became unpredictable after the introduction of internet technology and the vast expansion of electronic content available on the web, posing challenges in meeting users' needs. Meanwhile, competitive intelligence is a part of the library strategic management process; as a result, libraries, in

particular, shift from an inward focus based on the collection and use of input, process, and output measures to an outward focus based on the collection and use of external data.

## **Conclusion**

In accordance with competitive intelligence principles and strategy, library services are taking on a new dimension. The global trend has shown that traditional systems of information provision and delivery have given way to electronic and web-based formats. Traditional physical collections are giving way to electronic or even hybrid collections, if not completely. Libraries are making progress in aligning themselves with the realities of ICTs, primarily by computerizing routines such as acquisition, processing, charging and discharging, serials management, developing online catalogues and other retrieval aids, creating institutional repositories, developing library websites, and providing online information services, among other things, so as to gain competitive intelligence above others in information management value chain.

Intelligence gathering is critical in gaining a comprehensive understanding of changing library user needs and in assisting libraries in adapting their services and operations to meet those needs. Competitive intelligence provides advanced analytical tools, such as visualization and datasets that lead to more informed decisions and, as a consequence, transform the user's experience to a greater level of satisfaction with library information service. Within a library, competitive intelligence acts as a catalyst in the decision-making process for implementing digital or electronic library services. The provision of online databases, e-journals, e-books, and other digital collections was regarded crucial in the provision of electronic information services in libraries. In this sense, electronic information services relate to the collection and distribution of competitive information to assist in the usage of the service and information to improve library's competitive edge over its competitors.

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