Bridging the divide: integrating and positioning school libraries and curriculum with the emerging technologies: case study of Celebration School user community.

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Abstract:

Phenomenal change intheLibrary Information Service (LIS)industryiscurrentlychanging the way information is being disseminated and used in schools by pupils. Celebration School is among the schools in Zimbabwe and developing countries heavily affected by technology and yet at the same time need to fulfil its curriculum activities at the school. The emerging technologies like social networks (Facebook, MXit, MySpace, BiNu, and Whats app) are bringing in new crop of users yet challenging in library and information field. As a school, we must create enabling environments that promote strong development to ensure a viable future and systems that feeds into curriculum and teaching methods. Celebration school like any other private schools in Zimbabwe and other developing countries comprises of users born with and without technology and are at an advanced level of access information that is far beyond the norm of the society they are living in. Gone are the days when teachers used to be the only information providers. The emerging of other data and information capturing technology like podcasting is also posing to way information should be delivered by both the library and teaching community.Libraries remain and integral part in promoting education and also enlightening learning. Libraries support the curriculum, promote literacy development, and foster lifelong reading habits among children through the development of carefully selected print collections and the infusion of educational technology.

The thrust of this article it attempts to evaluate the emerging technologies which include e-books and audio-visual materials, have positively and negatively affected the information delivery system and libraries in schools and among the pupils, it will also proffer the technology syndrome among the pupils and how can it be used to their advantage. An analysis of the survey focusing on the integrating the use of modern gargets (tablets, ipads , androids , IPhones/Smart phones and all the gargets used by

teenagers) to delivery and share information amongst the school going teenagers will be shared. To be adopted at each stage of association development. This article discusses how libraries can underpin technology in the quest for information dissemination. The author also provides tangible solutions or recommendations for a functioning and effective modern school library that meet the school's curricula and user community need. It also postulates how the Open Access initiative (OAI) can be used to overcome the shortage of resources in this era where books are expensive.

Keywords: Celebration school, Emerging technology, School libraries, curriculum integration.

Background Information

School libraries are no longer centres or units that are taken as part of co-curricular activities in school but have become thrusts to the development of libraries in Africa and the world over. Celebration school (CS) is a Christian school is a locally relevant and internationally accredited family of schools committed to creating a legacy of transforming people and reforming nations which have been accredited by International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA). The School library at has the mandate to serve the school community which is elementary and high school. Although the library is in its infancy stage, it is there to meet the informational needs of its clientele in a Christian school environment. It is housed at the school premises which makes it part and parcel of the school. The ever emerging and changing technology are being integrated in library and information systems. School like CS comprise of users from infants to young adults who need varying information needs to support their curriculum and building and realizing their dreams through a "can do mindset". One of the interest things to note is that the curriculum used at CS include library lessons and use hence the need to instil the culture of research and reading in your children from the tender age of 5yrs.

 The school library manages a central collection of diverse learning resources to support a school's curriculum, meet individual students' needs and interests, and ensure that young people develop information literacy skills within the school's curriculum. This concept of a learning resource centre is both a social development of the twentieth century and an evolution of information exchange. With a population of just over hundred and ten students with almost 95% of the high students owning not just a phone but quality brand IPhones ranging from Samsung, Apple ,Nokia and Black Berry. With this view, access to the internet, gaming and social network is a common feature among the teenagers.

Vision and Mission Statements for the school and library (Information Technology Centre)

The school and library's vision and mission are unique and integrated in such a way that there much focus on building an individual who will impact the world in a greater way**.**

Library Vision Statement

To have the state of art library and information services that effectively and efficiently serve the CS community information needs.

Mission statement

"We intentionally develop students who are sought out globally for university because of their "can do" mindset, character, ability and willingness to lead."
The Celebration School Library provides a Christ-centred, quality education in order to prepare the children to serve Christ.

The mission and vision statement of the school library is coined together with that of the school.

User Community

The users at CS are students, teachers and support staff.

Students Book Ratio/Teacher

The school is proud to have a 1:1 student book ratio which gives a better advantage for students being able to fully utilise resources that are available.

Student /Teacher ratio

With and average class of 15 students ,the teacher stand a better chance to understand each one's reading habits, attitudes and interests. The school has an overall advantage over other schools especially the secular ones like the government, council and rural schools *("upper top")*. Learning in a Christian environment make the pupils unique from other school hence give them an extra potential to be disciplined

<u>Findings on the library use and reading habits of students</u>

I have observed that reading culture among the students need to be cultivated from the tender age as early as 4 years. Instilling this culture at an early age will build a habit of information seeking during their teen's period. Underlying this notion, the teenager poses great challenges as they are grouped into audio readers, audio-visual readers and textual readers. I have observed that reading habits is also connected to children through homes that are conducive and create a reading environment. Children with parents that support their children's home work and also engage in leisure reading plays a great role in instilling educational ideology. It becomes heredity that children inherit attitudes and habits from their parents (e.g. culture of learning and reading).

Library Lessons Allocation and resources circulation.

The school have incorporated the library lessons in their master time-table which give the students a better chance to use the library facilities. Library lesson is allocated to each class one visit per week for an average of 30 minutes per lesson. The policy enforces students to borrow at least a book per week per lesson. Extra books may be borrowed during the opening times of the library.

Information Literacy skills training (ILS)

Students and teachers are training in basic information literacy skills to make them aware of the informational resources around them. The following modules have being designed for ILS: Researching in the Library, how to find books, find Articles, search the Internet, use electronic databases, evaluate sources, citing Sources. This skill will enhance, encourage students to become life-longer learners and developing in students an ability to think cleverly, and encourage a love of reading culture and literature.
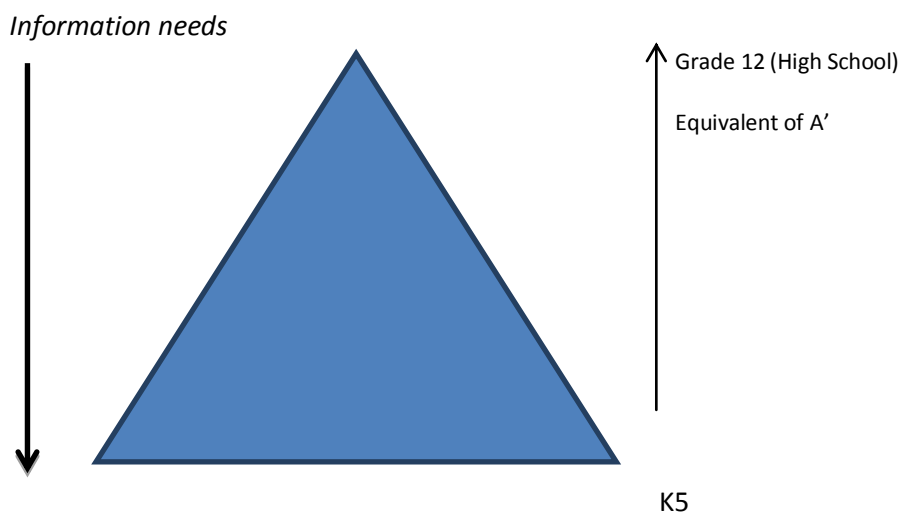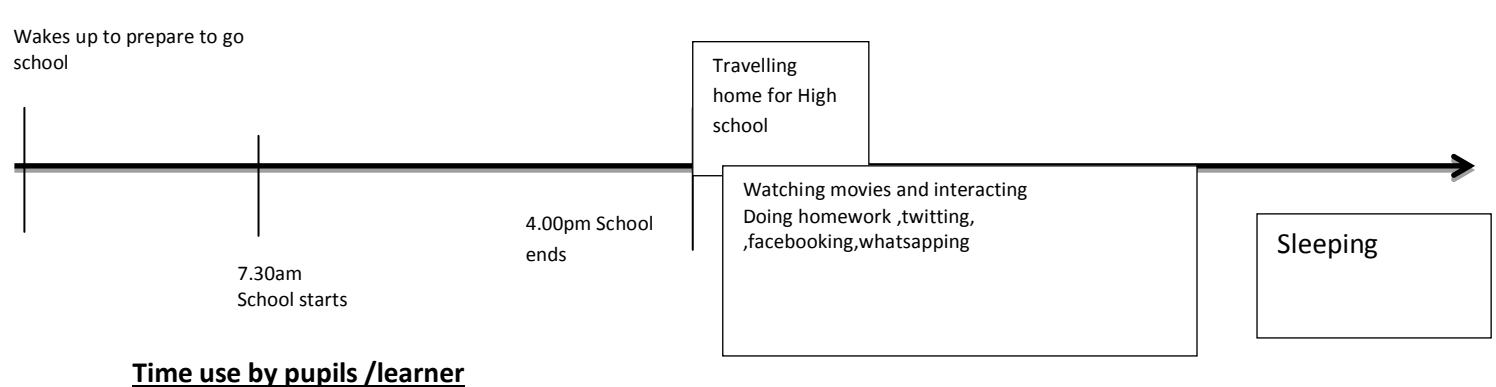
Figure 1: <u>**User Population and information needs**</u>

Information needs

Grade 12 (High School)

Equivalent of A'

K5

Figure 2: **Analysis of how students utilise their time in a day**

Wakes up to prepare to go school

Travelling home for High school

4.00pm School ends

Watching movies and interacting Doing homework ,twitting, ,facebooking,whatsapping

7.30am School starts

Sleeping

Time use by pupils /learner

Time spent by student during the 24 hour day can be summaries as follows: Time spend at school -----8 hours , preparing ----2 hours, movie or film watching/gaming videos –4 Hours, Homework ---1 hrs or less, chatting with parents ---1 hrs or less , Social Network-   5 husband Sleeping -8 hrs

Emerging Technologies, Reading/library and Curriculum

Figure 3: School, curriculum, Library and Information sphere of influence
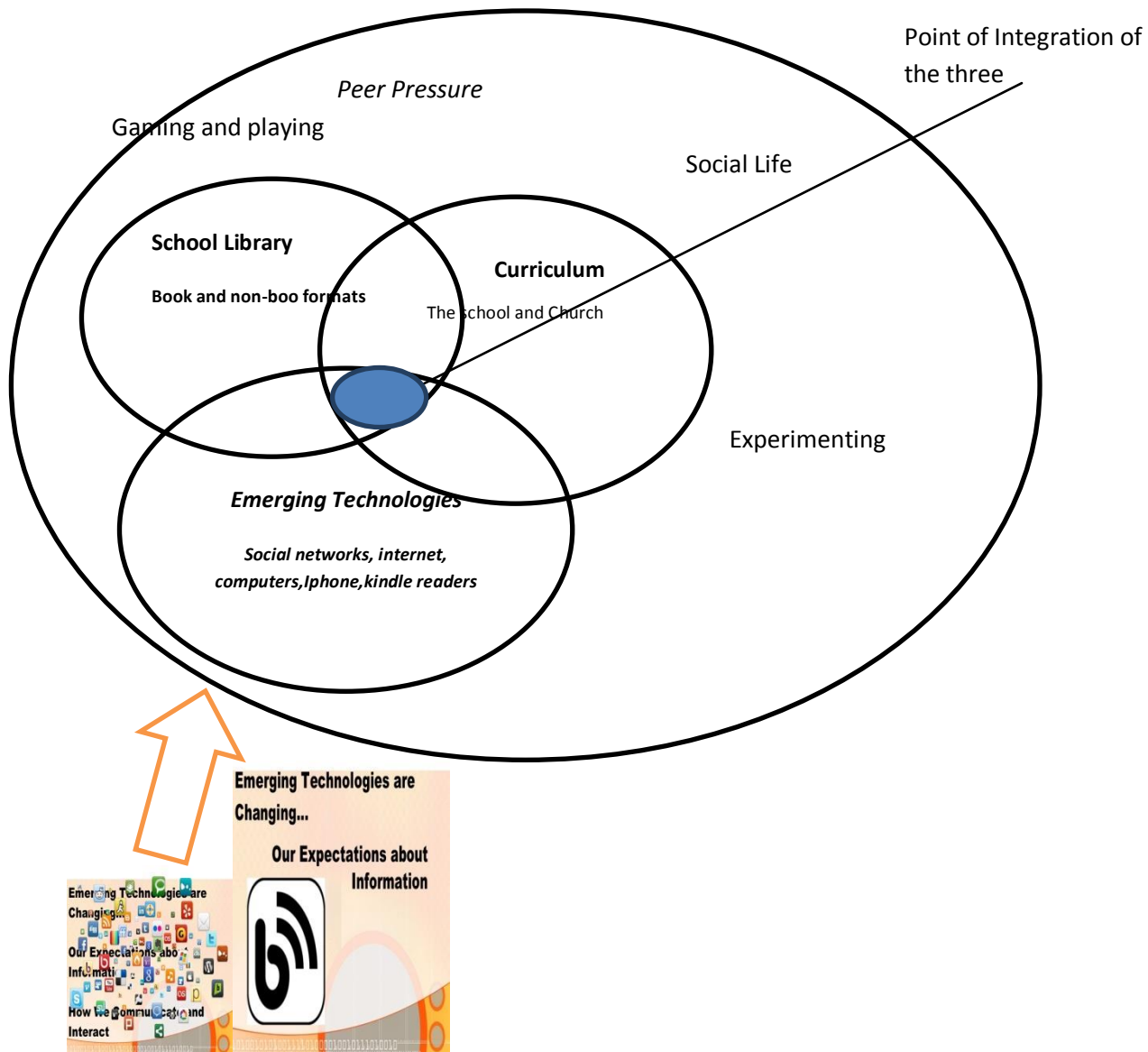
The emerging technologies have a greater impact on how libraries deliver their services to the school community.Therefore this has brought about new paradigm shift and crop of school libraries which does not only provide resources but multi-media and information technology centre that get involve in teaching ,developing and implementing school curriculum. The curriculum that are tailor made to integrate libraries have to a greater extent promoted a informational sensation among students Because

of the complexity of pupils 'attitudes and behaviour which includes the reading patterns and information searching behaviour there is need for a school library harness such innovativeness. CS library have gone further to digitalise some of the activities where users can look up for resources from their classroom with access to networked thin client monitors.

Unfortunately, too many of the places where students go online to interact with one another have policy-imposed walls between teacher and student. To this end the school enacted policies restricting teacher/student interaction, because most schools have banned most sites students use to communicate they do their best to prevent students from using these tools to communicate in an educational setting. Students are therefore allowed to leave their cellphones with teachers and only collect them after school. It is unfortunate that in the 21st century many schools have deemed adolescent socialization among each other or with their teachers as inappropriate. This is the pervasive outlook despite the fact that educators are fully aware that :(1) A healthy part of adolescent development includes socialization and (2) Research findings through focus group discussion and questionnaires done on high school students indicate that most students use social media to discuss educational topics and other studies indicate students who are using social media to discuss schoolwork perform better. Technologies can be described as vehicle of education, curriculum and information dissemination. It is also taken as hidden curriculum in schools.

Teachers have also amalgamated their lessons with library periods where pupil are assigned at 30 minutes of mandatory library times visits where pupils are equipped with information literacy skills like searching and using sources for information like biographies,year books , encyclopaedias , dictionary and atlas and internet. The new millennium era has seen the emerging of new technologies which have given birth to new inventions like e-learning, social networks, mobile networks, information super highway, digital and virtual libraries and I phones/smart phone technology. Education and learning have been globalised and the distance between people has been reduced by cyberspace. The new paradigm in communication technologies has in a way influenced social ills. Underlying this phenomenon school (curriculum), libraries and teachers have been placed in compromising position. Integrating technology with libraries and curriculum is a process the modern schools trying to keep themselves abreast yet the young generation are much advanced because of their experimental appetite. Teachers for instance are left with no option but jump in same new technologies "boat" with young generation born with technology. This generational gap is the one that matters when incorporating curriculum and libraries with emerging technologies

A close look and analysis of technologies like social networks (twitter, podcasting ,facebook,whatsapp ,LinkedIn, Hi 5, Bi NU messenger and MixIt just to name a few like posed a great challenge in the way

pupil communicate especially the young generation. Education and learning as part of curriculum need take all this into account in order to harness the students.   The roping of emerging technology have in way improved curriculum at CS and this new dimension in the mode of lessons delivery have therefore improved the way children learn. Email for instance has to a greater extent improved the way study materials reach the intended recipient.

Other schools that have taken the "don't ask, don't tell" approach to the social media curriculum are neglectfully choosing to look the other way as students communicate, collaborate, and connect in worlds devoid of adults. The result can be that just as in the real world, without any adult supervision, students could be at risk and are existing without models for appropriate behaviour. Inclusion of new media technologies in the school curriculum should be given high priority.

Additionally, we need another name for these environments. Yes they can be social, but they are often more than primarily social environments. They are connecting, networking, and learning environments where students have conversations and explore passions, talents, and ideas. In my case as a school librarian I have started helping numerous teachers to begin their own online learning communities with students and the results are dramatic. Work is published to a broader community. These emerging technologies allow students to easily see one another's work, share, rate and comment on it. They feel like their teacher's are finally interested in speaking their language like "whatsapping". Some teachers are amazed at the resulting conversations, ideas, and voices shared that would never have emerged had it not been for the integration of social media and technologies. The Smart phone for instance is a must not have gargets for the young generation including the school generation. My challenge is why not involve and incorporate this garget and other new technologies into learning. There was a lady from South African education system who did a presentation (Gateway Christian schools Conference) on utilising the technologies in delivering lessons in school. I liked the way she explained IT as one of the hidden curriculum. My discussion with couples of teachers during lunch break showed much concern about how there are handling this new kid on the block ,"Information technology" For instance in Zimbabwean community , social networks like Facebook has come with names like "pabhuku remeso" and songs associated with it have been composed. Young generation are so much into it. People are beginning to accept the use of Facebook in education and professional spheres.

Conclusion

The emerging new technologies have done a great deal in improving the communiqué environment. There is a gap which still exists between the old traditional generation born with technology, generation

born just and after emerging technologies (during the trial era in the 1980s and generation born with technologies.

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