USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) TO ENHANCE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ARABIC AND ISLAMIC STUDIES IN NIGERIA

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The process of teaching and learning and creation of knowledge has been carried on from the very first day of human history. As the body of knowledge grew bigger and bigger with varied dimensions the process of teaching and learning became formal and systematic. Need for methods and strategies to enhance the quality of learning originated. Over centuries educators have been concerned with the issue of increasing the efficiency of learning experience. The teaching of Arabic and Islamic Studies was introduced in Nigeria between the 11th and 14th Centuries. However, the methods and instructional materials used in teaching in those days were so limited both in terms of quantity and in terms of quality. In the contemporary time, the invention in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an important instrument for teaching and learning. The importance of on-line technology in enhancing education, and especially when it comes to teaching cannot be over emphasized. The paper examines how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Nigeria. For that, the paper discusses the various ways in which the effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used to enhance quality of delivery in teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies in educational institutions in Nigeria. The findings of the research work are that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) if properly harnessed and utilized will go a long way in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies. However, there are many challenges in the effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) especially in developing countries like Nigeria.

Keywords: Arabic, Teaching, ICT, Islamic studies.

Definition of Terms

ICT: Informational and Communication Technology
IT: Information Technology
SAW: Sallahu Alaihi Wasalama
Sunnah: Practices of the Prophet

Introduction

The inventions in the field of ICT have become an essential element in every aspect of human society in today’s globalised world. It is dynamic, penetrating and influential. Its contribution to individual, group
and societal advancement cannot be over-emphasis. Educational institutions have gradually and increasingly become aware of the need to involve ICT in their efforts to enhance teaching and learning. In Nigeria, the contribution of ICT to the growth of Educational Institutions has been overwhelming. Arabic and Islamic Studies with a large number of students has benefited immensely from the use of ICT. The results in the major Islamic educational institutions in Nigeria are quite noticeable. However, there are many challenges in the effective integration of ICT in teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

**Relationship between ICT and Islam**

One of the unique features of the Islamic society is the way in which it combines the immutable and the flexible. It is a society that strictly adheres firmly to its fixed principles, but at the same time encourages its followers adopt those things which are beneficial to the society. The Messenger of Allah (SAW) is reported to have said:

"Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, wherever he finds it, he has more right to it." (Ahmad 70)

In Islam all beneficial new developments in the fields of science and cultural achievements should be adopted, if they are not already present, and efforts should be made to bring them to the Muslim society, develop them and perfect them. This is a communal obligation (fard kifaya), as the Muslim scholars stated, and it requires paying attention to scientific research and allocating large sums of money to it.

Those who are unfamiliar with the Qur’an might be questioning themselves about the relationship between the Qur’an, which is a book, revealed in more than 1433 years ago and Information and Communication Technology, which is an invention of this century. Al-Qur’an is the book of knowledge and the first sources of Islamic law, which contains general principles applicable for all times and places. As the Divine Guidance is related to faith and belief, so it encompasses the practical sphere of human life as well as the spiritual aspect. The Qur’an and Sunnah therefore, have been provided with the principles as comprehensive as to offer the Muslims such solutions to their ever-emerging problems. Which on one hand, are well-balanced and consistent with the human nature; and hold good and ensure real success for them on the other hand, apart from that those problems and issues are occasioned by the circumstantial change or by the emergence of new means and hitherto unknown inventions.

The Prophet (SAW) and early Muslim scholars have possessed an exemplary model on how one should deal with the knowledge. They employed whatever means, were available at that time to access information, store, and process and distribute their ideas and knowledge. Because of their positive attitudes towards knowledge, Islam emerged as a great civilization for centuries. Islam categorized knowledge into two. The first category of knowledge is that endeared by Allah to operate through revelation. This knowledge is regarded as the highest form of knowledge and eventually is made compulsory on every Muslim to learn, comprehend and implement. The second type of knowledge is that acquired by human via rational inquiry based on experience and observation, which normally concern with worldly matter. This latter form of knowledge includes tanzur (observation), tadabbur (deliberation), tathakkur (recollection), takfakkur (consideration), tabassur (understanding) and ta’aqul (rationalization), all of which is mention in the Qur’an as mechanisms to gather knowledge. It is in the latter category lies the field of ICT.

In this respect ICT is not alien to Islam. In fact, the technology have adopted and used-in a different way-by Muslim scholars in the early Islamic history. Hence, the usage of ICT to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies is merely not a new issue in Islam. Service and applications offered by the technology can efficiently be utilized in order to distribute and increase the level of understanding the Islamic knowledge.
Bases for using ICT in the Qur’an and Sunnah

By its very nature, Islam welcomes every new Lawful invention based on the exploration of the forces of nature. Never can it disallow the use of newer inventions without genuine reasons. The Qur’an and Sunnah are the powerful microscope used in determining the lawfulness or otherwise of a thing. It declares that all things are the creation of Allah, who has created them for the benefit of human beings.

Do you not see that Allah has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the earth, and the ships that sail through the sea by His command? He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except by His Leave. Verily, Allah is, for mankind, full of Kindness, Most Merciful (Qur’an 22:65)

Many verses in the Qur’an

The early generation of Muslims travelled long distance to study at the hands of scholars. They would spend years of their lives travelling from one city to the next gathering knowledge. Nowadays one can travel around the world in less than a day. However, to gain Islamic Knowledge, one does not have to travel at all. This is why online technology is vital for quick search and dissemination of knowledge. In addition to this, the amazing advance in online technology means that Islamic knowledge is at our fingertips. If we want it, we can have it. It is just a matter of making the decision and having the discipline to carry us through. (Vaffi 88)

Islam is the religion of knowledge. The first verses of the Glorious to be revealed enjoined reading, which is the key to knowledge. Allah (SWT) says:

Read! In the Name of your Lord who has created (all that exist). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the Writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not (Qur’an 96:1-5).

Allah (SWT) created man and provided him with the tools for acquiring knowledge namely hearing, sight and wisdom. Allah says

قل هل يستوي الدين يعلمون ن والذين لا يعلمون انما يدند ك وو الا ليب

Say: Are those who know equal to those who know not? It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah’s sign and Verses)” (Qur’an 39:9).

Evidence that Islam does not interfere with scientific discovery can be seen from an incident that took place during the time of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), who once suggest to farmers that it might be better if they left palm dates trees without cross-pollinating them as they did every year. The following year, farmers complained that the trees did not produce normal yield, so the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said “You know the affairs of your world better”

Based on these and other similar verses of the Glorious Qur’an and the Hadith of the Prophet (SAW), the Ulama (Scholars) of the Shafi’i School and many from among the Hanafites holds that all things of the world are lawful to use, except that there are grounds to prove otherwise.

Advent of ICT in Nigeria

The first ICT initiative in Nigeria started in the 1950s with focus on print and electronic media. No major policy or other outcome was achieved because of strict government control. The full awareness of the
importance of ICT was absent. Only the private sector demonstrated ICT initiatives (Emadoye, 2002). The Obasanjo administration in 2001 established the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) to serve as a bureau for the implementation of National Policy on Information Technology. NITDA is trying to increase the Internet penetration levels in Nigeria.

Aminu, I. opines that institutionally up to the mid 1980s, if you wanted to talk, learn, or use computers, or do serious data-crunching analysis, etc, you went to a University Computer Centre, or to the National Teachers Institute. (Aminu 6)

Significance of ICT in Education

Teaching-learning process is a means through which the teacher, the learner, the curriculum and other variables are organized in a systematic manner to attain pre-determined goals and objectives. When used appropriately, the facilities of ICT is said to help expand access to education, strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by, among others, helping make teaching and learning into an engaging, active process connected to real life. ICT offers various technologies that can be used by the humans in order to facilitate their routine activities.

Using Information Technologies learners are now able to participate in learning communication throughout the world. They are independent and free in choice of their programmes of study and access to the resources. They may learn collaboratively, share information, exchange their learning experiences and work through cooperative activities in virtual learning communities. ICT help to facilitate teaching learning process in more productive fashion. Similarly, the role of teacher is also different in new settings than in the conventional system. Teacher facilitates and guides the learners in their study playing the role of a coach or mentor. Now teacher is not at the centre of the instruction and sole source of information as in conventional classrooms. In a nutshell, information technologies are restructuring teaching learning process to meet the international standards. Moreover, ICT is use in the following ways:

(a) It Improves the Quality of Education.
(b) It transform learning environment into learner centered.

Use of ICT to Students and Teachers

Students use ICT to

(i) Participate in a media revolution, profoundly affecting the way they think about and use of ICT.
(ii) Improve the ways of learning in new learning fashions.
(iii) Extend the ability and skills of applying their learning in real situation.
(iv) Working in groups for cooperative and collaborative learning
(v) Developing self-learning habits at their own pace and time.
(vi) Learn with teacher rather by the teacher.
(vii) Develop inquiry-learning habits.
(viii) Use right information at right time to achieve right objective. Review and explore qualitative data.
(ix) Exchange learning experiences and information with other students and teachers living anywhere in the world.

Teachers on the other Hand use ICT to

(i) Present the material in more interesting and attractive way.
(ii) Guide and help students in searching the qualitative material.
(iii) Make best use of time.
(iv) Coach the students.
(v) Provide individualized instruction.

The Concept of e-Learning

Quite simply, e-learning is all about learning that occurs at the computer. In this age, the learning at the computer simply means online knowledge acquisition through the internet or offline through CD-ROM, etc. The online requires the use of browsers such as Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. It can come in form of Audio, Visual, and Audio/Visual. But in this work, it means browsers-based technology. The convergence of the Internet and learning, or Internet-enabled learning is called e-learning. The uses of network technologies to create, foster, deliver, and facilitate learning, anytime and anywhere. It is also the delivery of individualized, comprehensive, dynamic learning content in real time, aiding the development of communities of knowledge, linking learners and practitioners with experts. (Salawudeen 4)

Lulea opined that E-learning is the process to learn anytime anywhere by using computer. E-learning is a general term for education, training and information delivered by computers. It puts the emphasis on the gathering of skills and knowledge. There are many names for different kinds of e-learning such as computer based training, web-based training, video conferencing which are called many things (Lulea 21).

Significance of e-Learning in Education

E-learning in education develops higher order skills such as collaborating across time and place and solving complex real world problems. It has the following advantages:

- Eliminating time barriers in education for learners as well as teachers.
- Eliminating geographical barriers as learners can log on from any place.
- Regular interaction is made possible leading to thoughtful and creative interaction
- Enhanced group collaboration made possible via ICT
- New educational approaches can be used.
- It can provide speedy dissemination of education to target disadvantaged groups.
- It offers the combination of education while balancing family and work life.
- It enhances the international dimension of educational services (UNESCO 22);
- It allows for just in time and just enough education for employees in organizations.
- It can also be used for activities like health campaigns and literacy campaigns (UNESCO 20).

E-Learning in Nigerian Schools

The e-learning techniques mostly adopted by most of the Nigerian institution are in form of prepared lectures on a CD-ROM that can be played as at when the need arises. This has limited advantage because of the number of students per computer system in which most of this facilities are not interactive enough as compare with when the lecture is been receive in real time over the internet. The intranet facilities adopted in most schools are not well maintained because of its high cost of running especially in the absence of adequate power supply. Mostly, the students took the challenges upon themselves to go to the public internet cafes where there exist diverse attentions because of people with diverse interest on the net at the same time. The bandwidth shared on various systems at the cafes is very low hence; a multimedia interactive lecture will not be obtainable because of low bandwidth. The population of student is enormous and the facilities are inadequate. Despite all the hindrances/threat faced by e-learning in Nigeria institutions, institutions such as RECTAS, Federal School of Surveying, Oyo, University of Ibadan,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (ABU), Federal University, Lafia and Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) Ile-Ife among others has the facilities for e-learning. These statistics is very low as a result of the remoteness in the location of some of these institutions in term of Information Communication Technology ICT. Though, most of the institutions of higher learning in Nigeria have started building their Information Communication Technology ICT centers but the focus is mainly to put up an internet facility alone without considering other components that made up e-learning centre.

Facilities Offered by ICT

i. Electronic Mail allows messages to be sent from a sender to the receiver over the internet. It is the most popular service of the internet.

ii. Graphical World Wide Web Offers a graphical web browsing facility to make the web a better place for both graphical and text information.

iii. Internet Relay Chat: That allows hundreds of public and private „chat Areas‟ with topics spanning various aspects of human interest. Usenet Newsgroups are forums for public discussions like Bulletin Boards and discussions areas of interest (Education, Politics, Sport, etc) and questions are entertained in these services.

iv. File Transfer Protocol (FTP)- It’s an internet service that provides a system for transferring files between computers. FTP clients can either be dedicated FTP applications or built into Web Browsers. FTP stored directories of files using a hierarchical structure. Normally, a user is a client, and a company acts like the server.

There are many resources on the Web that can enhance teaching and learning. People can even take university courses and other classes on the Web. Web is an excellent source of research material. You can find reports, statistics, directories and much more. To browse or surf the internet for information or search the net, one needs a search engine tool, which are numerous. Some of them are:

a. Yahoo! URL: http://www.yahoo.com -It is the most popular search engine and has links printing to various categories so that you can narrow your search.

b. Google URL: http://www.google.com-This is another useful search engine that can be used to search for information in education, politics, government, commerce, health and so on. Several books, journals, magazines, encyclopedia and newspapers can be surfed here. English and other languages can be adopted in browsing for a particular topic of any field in Google site.

c. Alta Vista: URL: http://www.altavista.digital.com-It is very good for non-common sites or very far home page but at times too comprehensive for what is required.

d. Excite: URL: http://www.excite.com

e. The Internet 2 Contribution: URL: http://www.internet2.edu/htul

f. Internet 2 is a research and development advanced internet technology and applications vital to research and education missions of higher education. Over 170 U. S. Universities, working together with partners in industry and government, are leading the internet 2 project. Internet2 is not a physical network that will replace the Internet.

Opportunity Offered by ICT

The current ICT is gradually elbowing out the traditional ways of doing things. In my view, the opportunity that could be accrued from the modern ICT for religious purposes includes:

i. Source of Information

ii. Information Dissemination.

iii. E-mail services

iv. Chatting

v. Net-Meeting
Integration of (ICT) into Nigerian Educational System

When used appropriately, different facilities of ICT are said to help expand access to education, strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by, among others, helping make teaching and learning into an engaging, active process connected to real life.

With the advent of ICT the definition of Teaching-Learning is changed in Nigeria. In 2009 the Federal Ministry of Education launched the Roadmap for the Nigerian Education Sector. The roadmap among other things was developed to address issues in the Education sector related to integration of ICT in Education sector. The roadmap indicates specific strategies to increase budgetary provision for ICT and laboratories in all schools with requisite ICT infrastructure and services to also accommodate children with special needs.

1. The Nigerian National Information Technology Policy

The ‘‘Nigerian National Policy for IT; was developed by the Federal Government in March 2001 through the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology. The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was established in 2001 and charged with the implementation of the policy. (FMST 21).

The policy is designed to ensure that Nigeria as a nation recognizes the strategic importance of ICT for national development. The adoption of the national policy is a critical step towards incorporating ICT application in every sector of the nation’s life and in particular in education (Kwache 27). In the 31 stated objectives of the policy, three are education specific and indicate that information technology must be used to:

- empower the youth with IT skills and prepare them for global competitiveness.
- integrate IT into the mainstream of education and training.
- establish new multifaceted IT institutions as centers of excellence to ensure.

Human Resource strategies targeting capacity building for IT knowledge and skills in education include the following:

a. making the use of (ICT) mandatory at all levels of educational institutions;

b. development of ICT curricular for primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions;

c. use of ICT in distance education;

d. ICT companies investment in education;

e. study grant and scholarship on (ICT);

f. training the trainer scheme for National Youth Service Corp members

g. ICT capacity development at zonal, state, and local levels;

h. growth of private and public sector dedicated ICT primary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions;

i. working with international and domestic initiatives for transfer of ICT knowledge.

Status of ICT Integration in the Nigerian Education System

a) ICT in Primary Education

ICT deployments at primary education level have been limited. The national infrastructure deficiencies motivated the government to subscribe to the US$100 XO laptop computer project for Nigeria’s 24 million public primary school children. In 2007 the government ordered one million of the OLPC version which could be cranked and would not require external power supply. The programme encountered
several problems inclusive of the hand cranked generators promoted by the vendor that proved difficult to work and required a good amount of physical strength that a primary level learner would not possess (Heit 21)

b. ICT Curriculum in Basic Education

Despite the low availability of ICT infrastructure in the basic education system, in 2007 Nigeria introduced ICT into the primary school and junior secondary school curricula following the launch of a new basic education curriculum in the country. The new curriculum, which has been approved by the National Council of Education (NCE), is aimed at addressing, among others, issues of value re-orientation, poverty eradication, critical thinking, and entrepreneurship and life skills. A major feature of the new curriculum is the phasing out of primary science and integrated science, to be replaced by Basic Science and Technology.

At the junior secondary school, computer education has been made a pre-vocational elective, and is a vocational elective at the senior secondary school. It is also the intention of government to provide necessary infrastructure and training for the integration of ICT in the secondary school system.

c. ICT in Secondary Education

School Net Nigeria was launched in September 2001 with high level support from the Education, Communications and Science and Technology Federal Ministries, as a project intended to equip all secondary schools in Nigeria with computers and communications technologies. School Net Nigeria is a non-profit organization public sector initiative geared at mobilizing Nigeria’s human and financial resources for the purpose of using ICT in education. School Net creates learning communities of educators and learners to use ICTs to enhance education by:

- Implementing, supporting, and coordinating (ICT) development projects in education
- Providing and supporting lower-cost, scalable technology solutions and Internet for schools
- Providing support mechanisms for schools for technical infrastructure and connectivity

Intel is assisting Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of Education in deploying 1:1 experimental deployments using Classmate high-tech, low-power notebooks. Currently, 3,000 laptops are being deployed to junior secondary schools, building on 250 already deployed in a pilot project. The deployment is part of a general project that includes assistance to FME in training 150,000 teachers to use mobile technology in teaching and learning. The laptop centred part of the project will expand to 200 schools, which will become out-of-hours community centres, so that the local community can have access to laptop.

d) ICT in Polytechnic and Vocational Education

The National Board for Technical Education has revised all curricula to incorporate ICT usage and published all curricula on its website. Most of the polytechnics and technical colleges integrate ICT into various short-time courses in word processing, Database Management, Spreadsheet and Statistical analysis leading to in-house certificates and diplomas. The challenge for the vocational education sub-sector is the analogue equipment in most of its institutions. Students require retraining in the workplace to use new technology equipment.

e) ICT in Teacher Colleges of Education

The National Policy in Education has consistently identified training of those responsible for facilitating education as a priority. The NPE states that ‘teacher education will continue to be given attention in all
our education planning, because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers’ (Olakulehin 27). The policy objectives of teacher education are to:

- provide highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers;
- encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large;
- enhance teacher’s commitment to the teaching profession.

The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) is playing a prominent by focusing on the review of the curriculum. The relevance of ICT and the cultural diversities that exist in the country are taken into cognizance. Computer Education has been made compulsory for teacher education, thus most colleges of education have computers and some form of VSAT (NITDA 28).

f) ICT Integration in University Education

The National University Commission benchmarks standards in 13 broad areas in tertiary education inclusive of variants of ICT in University curricula. There are ICT centres in all the Universities and strategies for funding and restructuring laboratories & facilities. Video conferencing facilities have been established in 4 Universities. The following ICT Development Initiatives in the tertiary sector are currently being implemented:

- Centre for Micro-Informatics Maintenance in Yaba College of Technology, Yaba, Lagos.
- Centre for Informatics Research and Training in Olabisi Onabanjo State University, Ogun State, Nigeria.
- African Regional Centre for Information Science (ARCIS) in the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- The Virtual Institute for Higher Education Pedagogy created by the National Universities Commission of Nigeria to provide teaching and learning methods in higher education to academic staff.
- The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) delivers courses on the basis of distance learning scheme.

Impediment to Successful ICT Integration in Nigerian Schools

Despite the importance of technology in education, several schools in Nigeria still lag behind in the integration of ICT. Several factors account for this situation. Five factors have been identified, especially as they affect the universities in Nigeria. These factors are organizational structures, infrastructural constraints; and government policy.

Yusuf listed the following as obstacles or barriers to technology (ICT) integration in Nigerian schools;

- Poor implementation of ICT in African school,
- Lack of teachers’ confidence and teacher’s computer anxiety,
- Lack of teacher’s confidence due to lack of time for training,
- Lack of resources,
- Lack of time to use ICT as a result of school time table,
- Lack of support,
- Infrastructural challenges such as erratic power supply,
- Lack of or ineffective technological leadership in schools,
- Lack of clear vision,
- Lack of incentive for teachers,
- Exclusion of teachers in the planning for ICT integration, and
- Teacher’s technology beliefs are yet another obstacle.
Using ICT to Enhance the Teaching and Learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies

a) Multimedia

The term multimedia by definition means “more than one media”. According to Hofstetter (2001, multimedia is the use of computer to present and combine text, graphics, audio and video with links and tools that let the user navigate, interact, create and communicate. In other words, multimedia is the combination of various digital media, into an integrated multi-sensory interactive application or presentation to convey information to an audience (Damodharan and Rengarajan, 2007; Butcher-Powell, 2005). Other than that, interactivity is also part of the elements that are required in order to complete interactive communication process through the use of multimedia (Jamalludin and Zaidatun, 2005).

Originally, a multimedia presentation did not have to be digital. For example, multimedia might have incorporated a slide show for visuals, a tape recorder for audio, and an overhead projector for text. But as software and hardware became capable of and adept at handling more than one media, the term multimedia was coined to define computer software applications and presentations that utilized more than one media (Shelly, Cashman, Gunter and Gunter, 2006).

Importance of Multimedia in Teaching and Learning

Multimedia can be effectively used for instructional purposes. The use of multimedia in teaching and learning is not only able to maintain students’ interest but also able to make them enjoy learning. Furthermore, multimedia has the potential to create high quality learning environments. The key elements of multiple media, user control over the delivery of information, and interactivity can be used to enhance the learning process creating integrated learning environments. Multimedia-based learning is becoming increasingly popular. It is up to date, inexpensive to obtain, and searchable.

Multimedia can also be highly interactive and engaging through the use of animation, audio and video files, games and online discussions. All these can be undertaken at any time and at any place and without the need for an outside workshop facilitator (Fien, 2009). Multimedia also is fast emerging as a basic skill that will be as important to life in the twenty-first century as reading is now. In fact, multimedia is changing the nature of reading itself. Instead of limiting us to the linear presentation of text, multimedia makes reading dynamic by expanding the text in certain topics. This is accomplished not only by providing more text but by bringing it to life with sound, pictures, music and video (Hofstetter, 2001; Rozinah, 2005).

Using Multimedia to Enhance the Teaching and Learning of Islamic Studies

Multimedia which encompasses animation, audio, video, graphic – both two dimensional (2D) and three dimensional (3D) is another one of the most complex and rapidly changing areas in ICT. It can be very entertaining, especially if it is equipped with high-end computers, all the necessary plug-ins installed and access to the Internet at a quiet time. Multimedia elements, if they are efficiently utilized can be useful tools to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Audio and video technologies are widely used by most of the websites in order to improve the way information are delivered, rather than presenting them in the text-based format. Al-Islam.Com (http://www.al-islam.com), IslamiCity.Com (http://www.islamicity.com) and IslamOnline.Net (http://www.islamonline.net) are among the Islamic websites that enable the users to listen for the khutbah or lectures conveyed by prominent Muslim scholars.

b) Microsoft PowerPoint Slides as a Tool in Teaching and Learning Arabic and Islamic Studies

Microsoft Power-Point if efficiently used can enhance the teaching and Learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Microsoft PowerPoint programme can be used to modify the contents of the material for
presentation in the Class. It helped to represent them in a more meaningful way, using different media elements. By incorporating multimedia elements into the project, the students can be able to learn better since they use multiple sensory modalities, which would make them more motivated to pay more attention to the information presented and retain the information better.

c) **Internet as a Wonderful Teaching AID**

In the borderless globalization of information era, internet plays a vital role as knowledge disseminator. Nothing can stop us from getting what we want to know, we want to see and we want to listen because internet can be accessed by everybody. Whether it is harmful or useful, it depends on us how to decide. One of the famous websites to use in enhance is YouTube website. You-Tube is a popular video sharing website where users can upload, view and share video clips. You- Tube has become an enormously popular form of Web 2.0 new media. A recent article in Wired cites an average of 65,000 uploads and 100 million videos viewed per day on YouTube. This number shows how great the response that YouTube gets from the viewers especially teenagers. That is why, in teaching Islamic Studies, researcher also had integrated some related video clips from this website into teaching and learning process, because video can be a powerful educational and motivational tool.

However, a great deal of the medium’s power lies not in itself but a means toward achieving learning goals and objectives. Effective instructional video is not television- to student instruction but rather teacher-to-student instruction, with video as a vehicle for discovery.

d) **Using ICT to Enhance the Teaching and Spreading Knowledge of the Glorious Qur’an**

The WWW technology has emerged as a clear leader in ICT applications, as evidenced by its enormous user-numbers. The WWW technology enables fast and convenient user-access to obtain data from a variety of sources on the Internet, which are then retrieved and displayed on the user’s web browser in various formats including: text, audio, video, etc. Therefore, the WWW provides an efficient mechanism for information-sharing between millions of worldwide users.

The development of cheap and convenient computer programs for various applications has increased in popularity. Consequently, increasing user-numbers are able to obtain computer software/programs containing digital Qur’an text, audio and other forms of multimedia for teaching the Glorious Qur’an. Such programs are made available for sale/distribution on CDs or as downloadable multimedia applications, which are then executed automatically through a simple guided installation process. Hence, the use of convenient easy-access, cheap or free software products result in a rapid increase of such software users countrywide, and thereby provide a mechanism for spreading and teaching the Glorious Qur’an.

An alternative mechanism for digital Qur’an distribution has become evident with the use of portable digital devices. Portable digital devices that enable the spreading and teaching of the Glorious Qur’an include: laptop computers, handheld digital-Qur’an, portable digital assistants (PDAs), mobiles, handheld iPods, MP3/4/5 players. The handheld digital-Qur’an is dedicated for teaching Qur’an through multimedia recitation, visual text displays and translation, whilst the remaining technologies facilitate the teaching of the Glorious Qur’an following software installation. Advantageously, portable digital devices allow users to read/listen to the Qur’an while on the move thereby removing the restriction of a single static environment.

e) **Islamic Distance and Online Education**

Through the distance and online programme ICT is use to enhance the teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Prophet (SAW) Said: “Seeking knowledge is a religious obligation upon every Muslim” (Narrated by ibn Majah).Allah (SWT) has blessed us to live in a time when access to Islamic knowledge is easy and inexpensive, such that there is no excuse for not seeking proper and authentic Islamic Knowledge. The early generations of Muslims used to travel long distances by foot or on
horseback to study at the hands of a Scholar. They would spend years of their lives traveling from one
city to the next gathering knowledge. It is a well known that collectors of Hadith would travel for months
to a far-away city, just to get one single Hadith from a narrator and to ensure the chain of narrators is
valid. At their time, travelling was very difficult, dangerous and time consuming.

With the fortunate development, in the field of ICT there are number of Islamic Universities that
offer Arabic and Islamic Studies online or through distance education. The following is a list of the top
most popular and trustworthy of these Islamic Universities:

i) American Open University: The AOU is an independent and non-profit Islamic University based
in the United States. The AOU offers many degree programs in Arabic and in English, Including
Diploma, Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate degrees. Their website is: http://www.aou.edu.

ii) American Open University-Egypt Office: The same as the American Open University discussed,
page above. However, serving the Middle East region. Their website is : http://www.egypt.com

iii) Sharta Academy of America: An independent educational Institution, with its headquarters
located in Tampa, Florida in the USA Sharia Academy adheres to the Quran and Sunnah, and
aims to spread Islamic Knowledge in a moderate and balanced framework. The Academy offers
Islamic education orally, by video-conferencing and interactive live broadcasting through the
internet available to students all around the world. Their website is :http://www.Shariaacademy.
com

iv) AlMagrib Institute: Provides courses on Islam in six-day, two weekends, intensive seminar
format, towards a Bachelor’s degree in Islamic Studies. Scholars teach the courses live and in
person in many cities in North America. Although the main program is not online, they do have
some online activities and seminars, Their website is :http://www.almagrib.org

v) The American inter-global University: An independent non-profit distance learning institution
offering several diplomas and degrees in various aspects of Islamic Studies AIU approach
depends totally on the Glorious Quran and the adoption and pursuance of the methodology of
Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h). Their website is http://www.aminuniversity.com

vi) Islamic Open Academy (Arabic Only): Free Islamic Courses in Arabic online, with course
materials, live and recorded audio lectures all available online. Top three Student get cash prizes!
their website is :http://www.Islamacademy.net

vii) Islamic Online University: Founded by Dr. Bilal Philips, offers an accredited Bachelor Degree in
Islamic Studies in English. Courses are offered online. Also offers a number of free courses.
Their website is: http://www.Islamiconlineuniversity.com

Islamic Websites

Apart from the various institutions that offer different online courses there are also some Islamic websites
which display various programs on Arabic and Islamic Studies. The following are some of the websites:

i) General Islamic Sites

ii) Specialized Islamic Sites

iii) Arabic link: Their website is: www.abdul.com/arabic.htm


v) Arabic on the www Ring. Their website is : www.geocities.com/Rainforest/3286/ring.html

vi) NetNile (in Arabic Language).Their website is :www.netnile.com/

vii) Arabic language Adventure: learn the basics of the Arabic alphabet and grammar with this step
by step interactive guide. Their website is : www.arabic-language.com

viii) Arabic Sinai: The newest language course is now being offered by the blue Beach Club. Their
website is :www.sinai.ch/

ix) Islamic virtual School. Their website is : www.Islamicschool.net

x) Fadi,s Home page. Offered free online Arabic Language Tutorial. Their website is:
fadl.webjump.com
xi) Arabic translation Bureau. Their website is www.maxpages.com/atransbureau
xii) Arabic twist Arabic and English technical writing and translation service via the internet. Their website is: www.accessme.com/free.html.\textsuperscript{16}

xiii) Arabic translation and promotion services. Available at www.geocities.com/Eureka/plaza.Available

xv) Scientific Miracles of the Qur an. Their website is http://www.Islampedia.com
xvi) Books of Hadith. Their website is http://www.sultan.org/
xvii) Takreej of Hadith sites. Their website is http://www.islammo.cc/had
xviii) Scientific I jaz of Sunnah. Their website is http://www.amaneena.com/meracle.htm

xix) Fatwa Sites (Arabic) http://www.alfiqh.com/fatwa
xx) Fatwah (other languages) http://www.fatwa-online.com

xxi) Siyam (Arabic) site http://www.islam.com
xxii) Siyam English site http://www.jannah.com
xxxix) Hajj (Arabic) site http://www.hajdirection.com
xxxiv) Hajj (English) Site http://www.umma.net
xxvi) Zakah English site http://www.thezakat.org\textsuperscript{17}

Audio Library

Recording of different recitations and styles. Their website is http://www.quranvoice.com/

Interactive Learning

In addition to the thousands of websites with authentic materials of Arabic and Islamic Studies for self-education, there are other web sites that engage in interactive session in teaching Arabic and Islamic studies. In such enlightened interaction there is hope for 21\textsuperscript{st} century that will be period of rapid advancement in Arabic and Islamic Studies.

Problems Militating Against the Use of ICT in Nigeria

ICT in Nigeria has a lot of shortcomings due to the following reason:

1. Poor educational system.
2. The so-called technology savvy doesn’t know how and want to share knowledge.
3. Lack of collaboration. Technology is beyond individual.
4. Lack of fund: To establish a good ICT center is capital intensive; most of our institutions both secondary/ tertiary do not have the fund to establish or maintain digital library or internet services.
5. Lack of adequate ICT infrastructure.
6. The major problem is that the use of computer, access to Internet and other tools of ICT are limited greatly to the urban areas, and the challenges faced by the ICT sector in the country include particularly the fact that the people in the rural areas are yet to know how to use the computer.
7. Insufficient awareness.
8. Lack of Motivation to Learn
9. A Common Psychoanalytical Conundrum
10. Lack of Interest in ICT.
11. Lack of competence: Most people lack the competent skills to operate these machines. In other words, most people are still ICT non-compliant.

12. Epileptic Supply of Power:

Conclusion

IT, as represented by internet, has given us fabulous opportunities for accessing information not easily available through traditional means. Information Technologies make it possible to tailor the content and delivery of instruction to the needs of individual students. The result is that individual differences in learning styles and preferences can be better accommodated. ICT provided many opportunities through its applications provide many opportunities. It is a part of the society. Thus, its applications can be efficiently utilized in promoting Islamic teachings. It is therefore, the responsibility of Muslims to use and master in this new technology, as well as to put their efforts to learn and comprehend Islamic teachings. In the future, Students will be able to choose the instructional format appropriate to their level of knowledge. The internet also offers an instructional environment in which assessment may be easily integrated into the learning process. This is relevant to every field of study, Arabic and Islamic Studies inclusive.

Recommendations

- To face the challenges and attain desired results, the government needs to rapidly expand educational opportunities and ensure that educational technology should be given special attention.
- To assure that internet technology is used to its best educational advantage, teachers must be trained in the most effective ways to use it. They must learn how to transfer their courses to an online environment.
- Arabic and Islamic studies Teachers should arrange to be trained in IT so that they ensure its proper usage in their quest to inculcate religious knowledge. If the teachers master the genie of technology and techniques of message design for the internet, they will have a much better chance of achieving the objectives of the course.
- Like their students, the teachers of the 21st century will need to become lifelong learners to keep up with developing technology and its expanding uses in instruction.

To integrate ICT into the education system, Olawale outlined the following as recommendations, which are designed to help institutions in working towards better integration and use of ICT to support learning and research.

1. Modern computer laboratories linked to the fastest internet should be provided in Nigeria institutions by the relevant agencies.
2. More practice is required for student both in the school and at home to enhance productivity and quality of graduate turn out from the Nigeria schools.
3. An overarching learning and teaching strategy should incorporate a vision for the use of learning technologies within the University.
4. Universities should consider carrying out a positional audit of the use of ICT in learning and teaching across the institution and should develop an associated mechanism for providing an ongoing database on innovations in this area.
5. Staff development for this area is often reasonably well provided for within institutions, however more thought needs to be given to provision of student support. Universities may want to consider developing a support framework for student support – an online “IT help desk”, which would point to study guides, workshops and support, as well as more specific module information and support.
6. Institutions need to be clear of their position with respect to the balance between innovation in this area and the development of cutting-edge technology applications and the confines of the IT infrastructure and support.

7. In general, there is a need for a clearer mechanism for communication and decisions about ICT-related matters across institutions and this should be addressed within the strategy and policy developments. (Olawale 23)

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