

## Bridging the Gap between Archival and Traditional Sources of History and the New Information Technology Revolution, 1960-2020

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### **Abstract**

*History as a discipline is evidence based. As a discipline, not only is history totally evidence based, it strives for a considerable level of objectivity. It was Leopold Von Ronke the erudite historian and scholar that emphasized that Historical objectivity is a noble dream. To achieve this reasonable and considerable level of objectivity, tutors and teachers assigned with the responsibility of teaching History to the next generation emphasize the processing, analysis and interpretation of collected data. In History, data is generally categorized into two broad categories, Primary sources and Secondary sources. Primary sources include Archival sources, government gazettes, oral history and artefacts. Secondary sources include processed information from Books, Textbooks, Journal Articles, Newspapers, Student thesis and Dissertations and online sources. The new Information Technology Revolution makes information from Secondary sources readily available to the historian. For years, in historical circles in Nigeria and in Institutions of Higher learning across the Country, Primary sources presented in research undertaking were treated by panelists and examiners with regality and honour while secondary sources sincerely presented and analyzed were not given the same amount of evidential weight. This at times led to the sad experience of the desperate and frightened making brazen attempts to label Secondary sources as Primary Sources. There are also aspects of contemporary research, like research into the Gulf War or the tearing of the Iron Curtain, where relevant and significant materials are more likely to be found and extracted from Secondary Sources. It is sad to observe that some first-generation Professors have been alleged to have insisted when supervising topical issues like the tearing of the Iron Curtain or the Gulf War that students get all their materials from archives in Germany and Iraq. This Paper states emphatically, with facts and arguments, that for the Modern Historian, Historical analysis should be a fair and decently balanced blend of Primary and Secondary Sources. This work will make use of Primary and Secondary Sources.*

**Keywords:** Bridging the Gap, Archival Sources, Traditional Sources, History, New Information Technology, Revolution

### **INTRODUCTION**

The study of any discipline begins with the study of the History of that discipline.<sup>1</sup> One of the reasons for this is to give students knowledge of the roots of their discipline and a bit of a narrative as to how it has evolved from Century to Century. One thing this introductory

<sup>1</sup> Nkereuwem David Edemekong. "History and the Necessity of Adjunct Disciplines in Nigerian Universities". In: Michael Afolabi and Joseph A. Ushie (Eds.) Harvest from the Gown: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Comfort M. Ekpo. Uyo: Flypapers Printing House, 2014, pp. 585-607. See also, Postgraduates Handbook, History Research Methodology, Department of History, University of Uyo, 2021, p.10.

historical discourse does inadvertently is to give students a sense of belonging and to throw up the Fathers of the Discipline. This in turn leads younger initiates to develop certain habits, lifestyle patterns and choices and to enable them to have a sense of value and honour for their calling and profession. When perhaps as an Accountant you choose to study the impact of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign on the early development of the Profession (early accounting has Babylonian roots) you might not have direct access to Archival sources, Oral sources or Artefacts, but you might have some ancient Papers from Christian Theological Seminaries and from Museums in Iraq and Iran. The rest of the data and information you might get might be from the shows and TV programmes on the Development of Money on the HISTORY CHANNEL on the Digital Satellite Television Service (DSTV). This indicates that while Primary sources and Oral Sources are good, trustworthy, credible and reliable sources of history, access to the root source of evidence is not possible in every instance. In many instances, the revised and deduced Secondary Source have proven to be more reliable, easier to access and more useful to the Historian than the Primary Sources. In the University of Uyo School of History, which is the Department of History and International Studies, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Scholars like Professors Sylvester Michael Eka, Dominic Albert Akpan, Anietie Akpan Inyang, Nkereuwem David Edemekong, Ubong Essien Umoh, Benard Steiner Ifekwe, Ibiang Oden Ewa, Ekong Bassey Demson, James Akpan Ekah, Ubongabasi Enenezer Israel, Esin Okon Eminue, Ini Tom Etuk, Ekaette Umanah Ekong, Mfon Isaiah Akwang and Anthony William Amamkpa have insisted from the Postgraduate level to the Undergraduate level that except where there are insurmountable challenges and constraints which should be determined by the project or Dissertation or Thesis Supervisor, a researcher should make all reasonable efforts to access valid and credible sources.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, in the University of Calabar School of History, which is the Department of History and International Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, scholars like Professor Winifred Eyoawan Akoda, Professor Frank Enor, Dr. Louis Edet, Dr. David Limishile Imbua and Dr. Obar Irom have equally insisted from the Postgraduate to the Undergraduate levels that bearing any unforeseen obstacles or limitations at the discretion of the supervisor, it is essential for a researcher, to exhort all avenues in pursuit of valid and dependable primary sources.<sup>3</sup>

To be fair to the Party championing a total or perhaps better put a dominant use of Secondary sources (the younger generation, Generation X and Generation Z) in the interpretation of History, the complaint has not always been that Primary Sources should be abandoned or discarded totally but that the insistence on their extraction and use should not be rigid. Referring back to the example of a study of the contributions of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign to the development of accounting as a Profession and discipline, If this was tendered by an Undergraduate student of History or Accounting, it would look burdensome by the Lecturer or Professor to insist that an Undergraduate Student travels to Iraq or Iran. In that instance, it might be interpreted and rightly so that the Lecturer or Academic is trying to show his or herself as an exotic no-nonsense Scholar. Some male and female Scholars in the Nigerian system have often been wrongly described by Students and uninformed outsiders as rigid or as overly stern. Thus, this academic Paper presented also seeks to bring to the light something that has come to the knowledge of startled Parents and a distressed public and how it is being interpreted by students and Scholars as an undue insistence, by academics in Nigeria on having a stern or

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<sup>2</sup> Handbook of the Department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Arts, Undergraduate Programmes. Uyo: Ndeco Educational Publishers, 2021, pp. 1-12. See, Postgraduate Programmes Handbooks, Uyo: University of Uyo Press, 2022, 2023, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Okon Edet Uya. *African History: Some Problems in Methodology and Perspectives*. Calabar: CATS Publishers, 2009, pp. 1-19.

notorious reputation. While this is true of a few bad eggs, it cannot be held as the case for all Scholars. In private hushed discussions among the younger, new generation of Academics, many reasons have been touted and put forward for the strange insistence by Nigerian Academics on having what is often wrongly called a stern or notorious reputation.<sup>4</sup>

Among the reasons touted is the approach of the older, charismatic Professors of History that dominated the landscape from the early part of the 20th Century. In history as a discipline, Scholars like Kenneth Dike, E.J Alagoa, Emmanuel Ayandele, Okon Edet Uya, Obaro Okime, FajSaburi Oladeni Biobaku, Akinjide Osuntokun, Adiele Eberechukwu Afigbo, Bala Usman, Tekena Tamunu, Waziri Jinadu, Erim Odey Erim, Toyin Falola, Monday Abasiattai, Monday Efiang Noah, Dominus Okon Essien, Koko Ete Ina, Ini Udoka, John Horace Enemugwem, Claton Thomas Udo, Eno Blankson Ikpe and many others. These Professors many who are now late were charismatic, enigmatic, exuberant and colourful scholars who technically could do no wrong. With a high level of Academic sincerity, it is safe to say that it has been very difficult to improve upon the core, foundation and groundwork of these initial scholars and Icons. This led to a reverential fear and awe and the generation of scholars that followed basically tried to copy what they did not understand at times with harsh, painful and tragic consequences. It is safe to say that it is the ground covered by these iconic first-generation scholars and the way they supervised their research students and delegated research problems and Questions to them that created the allure and followership and showed the much enhanced authenticity of a primary source. The World, society and indeed mankind has evolved hence the study, teaching and the process of research and processing data in the profession ought to evolve.<sup>5</sup>

For purposes of clarity, in front of a student, the researcher attempted to explain the whole Primary Sources and Secondary Sources Dichotomy. In this typology, which took place in the office of the erudite Dr. Obar Irom with a female student as witness, the researcher stated that if the Project student needed Dr. Obar Irom's earrings for instance and the Project student was in Kafanchan, two scenarios could occur. The student could send a DHL request for the earrings Dr. Obar Irom was wearing on the 22nd of July 2024. When the earrings arrived Kafanchan, the student would look at the earrings and examine for, colour, metal substance, durability, root of style, design and historical roots. With an insistent lecturer that is sometimes wrongly called a rigid, stern and difficult person, the student would travel to the Ancient City of Calabar, perhaps on the 15th of July, locate Dr. Obar Irom, trace the black smith, trace the root of the culture, talk to the black smith as to how the earring evolved, talk to the black smith's father with regards to the evolution of the design, discuss on sales and the distribution system and Prepare for a Face to face meeting with Dr. Obar Irom on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July. Thus, the effort by the Scholar whose supervisor insisted on Primary Sources would have a more holistic and balanced historical account. This is what was insisted on by the Pioneers and in deliberations by the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) it has been agreed that the Pioneers were not only just and fair in their insistence on Primary sources, but they were also honourable and noble.<sup>6</sup>

Primary sources as can be deduced from our example, usually have a significant amount of evidence to throw up, thus works that have primary sources as their root source are often seen as being more authentic and objective. It is also easier to break new ground with Primary

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 1-19.

<sup>5</sup> Okon Edet Uya. *African History: Some Problems in Methodology and Perspectives*. Calabar: CATS Publishers, 2009, pp. 1-17.

<sup>6</sup> S. O. Aghalino, O. O. Okpeh, D. L. Imbua. *Historical Research Method*. Abuja: Herodotus Publishers Limited, 2023, pp. 1-51.

sources and for a researcher to use these sources to make a meaningful contribution. We however live in a fast-evolving world and the demand and tastes of today's generation mean that most information is stored in the Cloud (a literal expression for vital information stored limitless internet space for future withdrawal). Apart from most information being stored in the Cloud, a good chunk of information exchange and interaction is done on the internet with Monster websites like GOOGLE, FACEBOOK, LINKEDIN, RESEARCHGATE, ACADEMIA, X, INSTAGRAM, CLUBHOUSE, WIKIPEDIA, YOUTUBE, ZOOM, SKYPE, WHATSAPP, MSN, YAHOO and others dominating the landscape and storing mega tons of information that is particularly useful for research. Perhaps as acknowledgement that we are in the internet information age, the units of Mega bytes and Gigabytes used for browsing is called data and in reality, is a ticket and a gateway to accessing mega tons of data, both good and bad.<sup>7</sup>

There are however challenges in accessing information from Secondary sources particularly the internet. One of the primary challenges with secondary sources and particularly internet sources is authenticity and credibility. The internet majors on entertainment and indeed about 65 percent of the websites and content on the internet major on entertainment and providing entertainment, interaction and comic relief. This useful and helpful and helpful and daresay deeply appreciated especially with regards to the ease and dynamism of interaction and the provision of information on the Go!! However, perhaps as a current deficiency, internet sources can sometimes be shockingly lacking in authenticity and originality. At the moment, and partly because Cyber Law is an emerging field, Internet information dissemination is particularly suited for the breaking of scandal information because the sources online can be retracted or drastically altered at the snap of a finger providing some kind of safety cushion for the publishers. This is rapidly being addressed by regulation and Cyber Law. Secondary sources and internet sources can also be subject to a lot of embellishment and even be put under a lot of falsification. This generation of Historical researchers however, (Generation X and Generation Z) can be unduly keen on using internet sources partly because of ease of access, Artificial Intelligence tools that can prop the student up to a level they have not yet attained and sadly what can be termed academic or intellectual laziness. According to Professor Okon Edet Uya, "you learn to write by writing". The researcher, while conducting this research, reviewed a number of websites that provide Artificial intelligence (AI) for the conduct of research from inception to conclusion. While the outcome of the work produced by these Artificial Intelligence softwares are commendable, they tend to weaken cognitive abilities and capacity for research and at times defeat the essential reason why lecturers are in the University.<sup>8</sup>

Another reason why Primary sources most of the time are preferred for Postgraduate work is that, apart from deliberate breach or retrieval by the author of content, there can be unintentional breach by hackers and unscrupulous elements. Thus, consequentially it can be stated that information or data on a website or in a portal can be mischievously retrieved or the portal crashed. Due to malfunction or lack of maintenance the storage portal can also crash or be temporarily out of order putting paid to years of Work and uploading. The same scenario can also occur with Primary sources say with an Archive. The incidences have however been few and far between, a fire outbreak here and there and perhaps the odd theft or retrieval lending credence to the proposition that Primary sources have greater longevity and are less susceptible to illegal breaches.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> S. O. Aghalino, O. O. Okpeh, D. L. Imbua. *Historical Research Method*. pp. 1-51.

For the Tech Savvy individual, there are and will be great benefits in the use of Secondary sources that were not available to researchers that made use of Primary sources. With advancements in educational technology, most Universities in Nigeria have adopted Plagiarism Checks and software particularly at the Postgraduate level to make sure that their Postgraduate students academic work are an original contribution to knowledge. Prior to the advent of Artificial Intelligence Technology (AI) it was possible for a Postgraduate student in the University of Calabar for instance to travel and fraudulently extract a Postgraduate work in Zamfara State for instance, and present as his own fully aware (perhaps in his or her thinking) that it was highly improbable for the Supervisors, the Postgraduate authorities and the degree awarding establishments to run into the original source documents. When this ugly trend continued for a long period of time, well-travelled Professors and Academics who had seen the corrective consequence of Plagiarism checks begun to agitate through the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) for the practice to be introduced in Nigerian Universities. This has been done and Postgraduate Schools across Nigeria are approaching hundred percent (100% ) implementation. This has had the attendant consequence of producing cutting edge research at the Postgraduate level. This achievement and innovation can be seen as a vital upside of Artificial Intelligence and Innovation that is causing it to be embraced Country wide in Nigeria.<sup>10</sup>

Currently, all over the World, there are efforts to develop staggering databases to store Quantum amounts of information and possibly sometimes at a fee, depending on many factors like the pedigree of the institution make it available to the public. This would mean that for instance, if the Researcher needed a Thesis or Dissertation on Minesota Labour Law, he could google the name of the Primary University there, Access the Law library and use the online index that works like Law Pavillion currently used by the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) and have access to the materials he needs, probably in PDF format. This makes the research project efforts of Students particularly worthwhile. If there is one day a series of monster websites like GOOGLE, ACADEMIA and RESEARCHGATE that can synchronize research projects, dissertations and thesis across most Universities then Plagiarism will be a lot easier to track and with this knowledge students will be more committed to original research no matter their discipline. It would lead to greater collaboration globally and the collaboration would lead to a lot of great advancements in Science, Medicine and Surgery, Agriculture and Food Technology, Information Technology and Computer Science, Education, Architecture and Building Construction, Social Sciences, Law, Arts and Humanities. The attendant consequence of this would be a whole new era of Knowledge and illumination. The academic environment created would be the same as the academic and scientific environment created in the period of the French Revolution, the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution.<sup>11</sup>

## **ALGORITHMS AND THE ADVANCEMENT OF ACADEMIC SOFTWARE AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Algorithms are a process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer. It is quite useful in the design of the Analytics segment of Academic websites and in organizing the timeline of Social Media websites based on likes, favourites and other interest indicating applications on the Giant Social Media websites. In the 21st Century Social Media Websites, particularly FACEBOOK, TWITTER, X,

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> C. K. Chan. *Is AI Changing the Rules of Academic Conduct?* An In-depth look at student's perception of AI-plagiarism, University of Hong Kong: Faculty of Education, 2022, pp. 1-17.



INSTAGRAM, TIK TOK, YOUTUBE, AMAZON and NETFLIX among many others. According to Bolaji, T. K. Chandra Sekhara Rao Annavarapu, Annushe Bablani, Social Media (SM) are the most widespread and rapid data generation applications on the internet and they increase the study of these data, like Machine Learning. Machine learning methods make the system to learn itself. Many papers are published on SM using machine learning approaches over the past few decades. Any discerning professional or expert in information technology would have realized by **now that a** vast and staggering amount of information is stored on the cloud or on the internet and this information is available on demand. Thus, the bulk of technology is channeled at making the search applications more precise and accurate and this is being achieved with devastating brutality. Currently in Academics in Nigeria, there is a strong insistence by Academics, Scholars and Researchers on publishing only in Journals that are visible online. Thus, in regular banter among colleagues in the University of Uyo, the Question is often asked if a Paper or a Journal has “visibility”. Largely because of this insistence on being visible on the World Wide Web, Journals that had only Paper editions are making massive efforts to build World class websites and to be available and visible on the World Wide Web.<sup>12</sup>

Due to the emerging fact that the internet has become a large limitless repository of all types of data and information, in the advanced climes of Europe, Asia, the United States, South America and Canada there is renewed interest and funding for the study of Mathematics and Further Mathematics at all levels. This is done with calculated and deliberate intent. Thankfully in this regard Nigeria is not totally left out as Cowbell Milk, a Milk producing company in Nigeria frequently, rigorously and regularly holds highly competitive Mathematics competitions for Children at the Primary level, and the Secondary level. This is a highly commendable effort that should be emulated by other sizeable companies, encouraged and supported. The Cowbell Mathematics Competition is frequently aired on the Network of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) perhaps indicating to all and sundry that government supports this worthwhile venture.<sup>13</sup>

Algorithms are also used extensively on research sites. Thus, beyond the study of Mathematics the study of Statistics has become very useful to the historian. These statistics are easy to glean from the internet with more devastating accuracy. Very specific demographics can be enhanced on the internet thus it should be possible to find out some necessary demographic information about a person from registered before a transaction, especially a financial transaction. Thus, for a specific, narrow search the researcher needs a fairly accurate Search engine to extract information that can be cited Internationally. There is a word going around quietly in Information Technology Circles and that word is INTEGRATION. Websites in the same area of influence, same division, same sphere of influence and same scope are being integrated. Some of this integration is done through outright buyouts and takeover of similar companies. This has been the fate of companies like WHATSAPP that was bought over by Facebook. For many this has greatly assisted in identity management. Apart from identity management it has converted individual, single users of both Apps to become happy dual users of both Apps.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> C. K. Chan. *Is AI Changing the Rules of Academic Conduct?* An In-depth look at student’s perception of AI-giarism, University of Hong Kong: Faculty of Education, 2022, pp. 1-17.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DEVELOPING TECHNICAL SKILLS

Parents usually send their wards to a university so they can earn a degree and develop technical skills that employers of labour would love to pay for. Hence with the benefit of foresight and hindsight you see parents insist on certain courses of study like Medicine, Law, Engineering, Architecture, Computer Science, Information Technology, Accounting, Geology, Banking and Finance and many others. Parents insist on these courses for many reasons which include Prestige, Market appeal, Changing times, Compatibility with Child's natural ability and indeed their own natural ability and at times guidance by a concerned teacher. When the researcher went to college (Department of History and International Studies, University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, 1995-2000) everything was done manually, the numbers in the classrooms were less and the tutors, lectures, Lecturers and Professors were very, very rigorous. This had the intended consequence of imparting deep irreproachable and highly dynamic skills to the students. As a testimony of the researcher who is presumed to be truthful and forthright, these skills have stood the graduating students in this time frame (1995-2000) in good stead in almost every human endeavour both locally and internationally. As stated earlier, Artificial Intelligence can be very useful in detecting fraud and spotting plagiarism. It is however the view of the researcher, that too much use of Artificial Intelligence by a student can hamper the acquisition and impartation of technical skills. The recommendation at this point is that the use of Artificial Intelligence be mostly in the hands of mature users.<sup>15</sup>

In today's (2025) world there are a gamut of Artificial Intelligence websites that are constantly being upgraded, reviewed and updated to meet the ever demands, needs and tastes of its end users. One of the most recent that shows great promise for mass usage is samwell.ai, a modern and trendy Artificial Intelligence Website that helps with referencing and plagiarism checks. After opening an account and reviewing the capabilities, the researcher still came to the same conclusion that in the African environment, it works best in the hands of a mature user. One reason why these Artificial Intelligence work best in the hands of a mature researcher in the liberal arts is the development of diction and the power of analysis. These are best developed through cerebral interaction, research and reading.<sup>16</sup>

The art of independent analysis can be stifled in a young scholar who completely relies on Artificial Intelligence software. What is particularly disturbing to the Arts and humanities community in the University of Uyo is that at times students go as far as using two to three Artificial Intelligence websites to do their work. While one website gathers the information another processes it into an assignment, a thesis or a dissertation while yet another helps the student clean up the trail so the Lecturer cannot identify it as a material produced by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Hence the question is often asked if a student would go through all that effort to create a material or to create a work that can't be fingered for plagiarism, why not take the pains and effort to do the right thing and learn.

Thus, in dissecting the economy between using old archival materials and relying on Secondary sources, internet sources and archival materials, one word stands out and that is expedience. A scholar or researcher should use the material that is a direct fit or that is appropriate for the work that he has at hand. A situation where a researcher tenaciously sticks to either primary sources or secondary sources without providing appropriate reason should be

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<sup>15</sup> S. Mishra. "Enhancing Plagiarism Detection: The role of Academic Intelligence in Upholding Academic Integrity" Library Philosophy and Practice, 2023, 1-14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

rigorously discouraged. Thus, in conducting any historical research undertaking in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the words academic expedience must be repeated over and over. The research undertaking of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must thus be a combination of Primary Sources, Secondary sources and where necessary assistance of Artificial Intelligence software and websites. This, in the view of the researcher will not only make the work of the scholar whollistic and balanced, but it will also enable future researchers improve on the existing work and possibly break new ground. Enabling upcoming scholars to break new grounds and make advances in the study of History<sup>17</sup> is one of the challenges of the profession in the 21st century. Helping Academics, scholars, teachers and students' bridge this gap is one of the challenges that this paper seeks to address.<sup>18</sup>

## **DETECTING PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC FRAUD THROUGH THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

At every level after what is called Senior Secondary in Nigeria and High School in the United States of America, a student is supposed to make an original contribution to knowledge. Be it with his Undergraduate Project, Master's Thesis or PhD dissertation a student is supposed to make a genuine and original contribution to knowledge. When this and other requirements are not met the degree is not usually awarded. High quality research work can be difficult, tedious and rigorous and it is usually the committed, diligent, honest and sincere student that succeeds at it. Largely because of the rigour, and at times a lack of diligence and initiative on the part of the student, there are usually attempts by students to circumvent the process. In Nigeria this is done in a variety of ways. The most common prank is to go to a remote location work and pick a work for direct copying. Another common prank is to pay a mercenary after a familiar topic has been approved. An emerging prank that is giving room for concern is to attempt a rephrase or a paraphrase of an existing work. Sincere and concerned academics often ask the question as to why students take the bother with dubious methods that stifle their creativity and research capacity instead of seeking genuine assistance and help that is readily available from Academics on the University's payroll.<sup>19</sup>

The sad part about these pranks and attempts to cut corners is that more often than not discrepancies are usually spotted by an internal and external defence panel. An issue worthy of research and debate is why students in Nigeria always tend to prefer an option that involves cutting corners no matter how ridiculous and obscure the process may be. It might well be that Corruption, graft and impunity has eaten into the psyche of the average Nigerian thus cutting corners always seems like the rational thing to do. There is also the issue of ever falling standards in education in Nigeria at all levels. When a child cannot meet the prerequisite requirements, he or she is usually quick, at a higher level to embrace fraud and unscrupulous activities as the means to qualifying, passing an examination or getting the required qualification or Certificate. There is thus a serious need to shore up education in Nigeria to ensure that the bulk of the students, pupils and wards do not just have the required knowledge and skill sets, but also have the required confidence levels to take on any challenge or Project. When students have the required confidence level and forthrightness the first instinct when faced with a challenge is to look for a legitimate way round the challenge rather than make a

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<sup>17</sup> Nkereuwem David Edemekong. "History, Culture, and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: Challenges and Strategies". *The Calabar Historical Journal*, vol. 6, No. 1, 2016, pp. 188-210.

<sup>18</sup> S. Mishra. "Enhancing Plagiarism Detection: The role of Academic Intelligence in Upholding Academic Integrity" pp. 1-14.

<sup>19</sup> T. H. Cormen et al. *Introduction to Algorithms*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2022, pp. 1-113.



brazen attempt to cut corners. To further dissuade the headstrong, the systems, especially at the Postgraduate levels must be fortified to an extent that an individual that has an intention to commit academic fraud will come to a realization that he or she will surely be apprehended.<sup>20</sup>

Attention must also be given to training on educational psychology and basic teaching methods to an extent that no matter the frustration or anomalies an academic may encounter they do not take it out on young innocent minds. The Nigerian educational system must be redesigned and restructured in such a way that it caters to the moulding and upbringing of the total man. When this is properly done at the primary and secondary school levels, the student does not see the need to resort to mischievous means when he gets admission into a higher institution. The teacher apart imparting knowledge must convince all their students that they are special, unique and exceptional people who are destined for greatness. Self-worth and self-esteem must be emphasized at the primary and secondary level. This emphasis usually becomes quite useful when the students are faced with seductive peer pressure and the temptation to compromise their values.<sup>21</sup>

### THE FUTURE OF THE ARCHIVE IN NIGERIA

An archive is a place where public records or historical documents are preserved. An archive usually contains Letters, reports, Minutes, registers, maps, Photographs and films, digital files and sound recordings. They are two main types of Archives. They are the Government Archive and National Archive and the Organizational Archive. An Archival centre working under the government and storing government documents is known as a government archive. It usually contains government related documents. The Organizational Archive is usually the storage facility of a large organization like United Bank for Africa PLC or First Bank of Nigeria. There are also religious archives and personal archives. The principal function of the Government Archives are the collection, management and preservation of government and historical records. To archive a document is to store a document either in an archive, a computer, a database or to store electronic information you do not intend to use frequently.<sup>22</sup>

The term archive is derived from the Greek word called “archeia” which means public records. With the rapid development of electronic storage, the question is often asked as to if there is a future for the traditional National Archive in Nigeria. The answer to this question in the view of the Researcher is a very emphatic yes, that there is a very bright and relevant future for the Archive in Nigeria. What should rather be considered is digitalizing the Archives so that information can be requested for and extracted remotely without a compulsory visit to the archives due to expedience. This will make the public’s association to the National Archives less strenuous and consequentially there will be an upsurge in investigation into varying issues of National importance and significance.<sup>23</sup> This will have the intended consequence of providing answers to a number of pressing National historical questions. This digitalization of the National Archives can be achieved if competent hands are brought on board to handle the project and if responsible amounts of money are set aside for the cause. The author of this paper thus as a matter of priority, encourage the Federal Government to embark on the digitalization of all its national documents and make the bulk of this document available on demand after

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<sup>20</sup> T. H. Cormen et al. *Introduction to Algorithms*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2022, pp. 1-113.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>22</sup> S.O.Aghalino, O.O.OKpeh, D.L. Imbua. *Historical Research Method*. pp. 1-51.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Robert Bassey and Nkereuwem David Edemekong. “The Usefulness of the Discipline of History to the Discipline of Law and Law Practice in Nigeria”, In C. E. Osuagwu, E. N. Ota and J. C. Nwadike (Eds.) *Economic History and Issues in Human Development in Africa: A Festschrift in Honour Professor Anthony I. Nwabughuogu*. Umuahia: Charles Patricks, Michael and Tessy Publishers, 2019, pp. 851-868.

due and diligent online registration. That way, the works of first and second generation Historians like Kenneth Dike, E. J. Alagoa, Emmanuel Ayandele, Okon Edet Uya, Monday Efiang Noah, Obaro Ikime, FajSaburi Oladeni Biobaku, Akinjide Osuntokun, Adiele Eberechukwu Afigbo, Bala Usman, Tekena Tamunu, Waziri Jinadu, Erim Odey Erim, Toyin Falola, Monday Abasiattai will be revisited, re-explored and revised with the benefit of hindsight and emerging facts. This will consequently do a world of good for the development of History as a profession and discipline in Nigeria.<sup>24</sup>

It is also the humble submission of the author of this paper that the Country can do with at least six or seven geopolitically dispersed National Archives. Apart from establishing new Archival Centers there should be some sort of interconnectivity among the Archives in the Country where hypothetically from Uyo, if a Scholar can get to Calabar, he should be able to access most of the content in the Ibadan Archives and vice versa. This increased convenience will make scholars of History more ambitious knowing that the huge transportation consideration that had hitherto existed no longer exists.<sup>25</sup>

### **BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ARCHIVAL SOURCES AND MODERN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOFTWARE AND WEBSITES**

When the researcher working on this paper use the words bridging the gap the researcher means that one of the primary purposes of this research undertaking is to show a younger generation of Historian that it is sensible to consider Primary Sources and Secondary Sources equally as they are both relevant in pursuing most modern research undertakings. One of the ways this can be done is to insist on their collaborative use in term papers, seminars, project undertakings and Postgraduate Research. This, if done will help a new generation of researchers know the varying use of these materials and their varying application in different research scenarios. A research work or undertaking that carries both Primary and Secondary sources usually has a balanced outlook to it. In keeping up with changing times there must be trainings, workshops and seminars geared at helping Academics detect Plagiarism and fraud that is generated by Artificial Intelligence. This must be done very rigorously and deliberately as the current generation seeking first degrees in institutions of higher learning, Generation X and Z is big on Information Technology and Software. They have been jocularly called the Social Media generation by the older generations partly as a testimony to the fact that the bulk of their life is lived online. Dr. Myles Munroe described the generation X and Z as the sight and sound generation indicating that they learning more by seeing and hearing than by reading as was the case with the preceding generations. There is evidence to buttress this claim by Dr. Myles Munroe with the abundance of audio visual videos, comedy skits, documentaries and reels on almost any subject of amusement. The telecommunication giants in Nigeria and indeed around the world have been quick to cash in on the rave, with the sale of data and data bundles becoming a mega money spinning international business.<sup>26</sup>

The Mobile phone producing companies have also not been left out in the rave to be seen and heard online as Camera and Video making capabilities are some of the major considerations in the production and pricing of a mobile phone. With the current mobile phone giants like Apple, Samsung, Tecno, Itel, Huawei, Infinix, Nokia and Alcatel continually perfecting the act of generating and responding to customer feedback and producing bigger and better brands

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<sup>24</sup> S. O. Aghalino, O. O. Okpeh, D. L. Imbua. *Historical Research Method*, pp. 1-51.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> S. Mishra. *Enhancing Plagiarism Detection: The Role of Academic Intelligence in Upholding Academic Integrity*. pp. 1-14.

every year, there is bound to be a massive upsurge in the quantity and quality of evidence available online. It thus behooves on the historian to quickly adapt to changing realities and evolve teaching methods to enable the Historian<sup>27</sup> to sift through the plethora of audio visual evidence available online when looking for historical evidence. It is the position of this paper that audio-visual learning should be slowly and carefully integrated into the curriculum to make learning more pleasant and pleasurable. When discussing significant historical events like the First and Second World War or the treaty of Versaille, interesting audio-visual clips can be injected to stimulate the minds of the students and to facilitate memory and recall. Decent interdisciplinary audio-visual productions can also be made in collaboration with the Department of Theatre and Media Studies that will further help the students understand the scenarios and emotions that were at play and to further stamp certain key facts and principles in their minds. If currently non-existent, Departments of History and International Studies across the nation should carve out and Audio-Visual learning room that subscribes to The HISTORY Channel and other such Channels that reel out important historical documentaries.<sup>28</sup>

At this point in this research undertaking, it is important to emphasize and reiterate that for the gap to be bridged between archival sources and archival research and modern information technology methods ease of access must be promoted. Please note that ease of access is not translated as looseness of access. The United States and Canada for instance try to promote ease of entry and something close to an Open-door policy for those coming for legitimate ventures like education, entrepreneurship, research work and business. The process of acquiring these visas and permits is however rigorous and detailed. This is to ensure that they admit only the qualified and serious and should something go wrong there should be enough background documented information to trail and apprehend an offender. A similar arrangement can be deployed for serious researchers seeking to access national facilities remotely to gain access to primary documents. Such researchers should as a matter of statutory duty fill comprehensive forms that reveal their identity, vocation, purpose of the research and some binding indemnity against the misuse of the information. In the forms for documentation they should be made to surrender their National Identity Number (NIN) as currently issued by the National Identity<sup>29</sup> Management Commission (NIMC) and their Bank Verification Number (BVN) as currently issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).<sup>30</sup>

Researchers can also be humbly and politely requested to furnish the Archives, Institutes, Departments, Agencies, Commission or Ministry with a copy of their completed research undertaking that can be stored in a repository to assist a future researcher pursuing a similar objective. These completed research works extracted, retrieved and stored can form some sort of Library, serve as some sort of acknowledgement of the resources or the information available in the Archive, Ministry Department or Agency and the role it played in the scholars research undertaking. This polite academic practice will ensure that the data and evidence available for

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<sup>27</sup> Nkereuwem David Edemekong. "History and Development: Nigeria's Search for Status and Development". *Uniujo Journal of Humanities*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2016, pp. 79-92.

<sup>28</sup> S. Mishra. *Enhancing Plagiarism Detection: The role of Academic Intelligence in Upholding Academic Integrity*, pp. 1-14.

<sup>29</sup> Nkereuwem David Edemekong. "Citizenship and Identification Problems in Nigeria: From National Civic Registration to National Identity Card Project, 1978 – 2003". M.A. Dissertation, University of Uyo, Nigeria, 2004, pp. 23-30.

<sup>30</sup> T. Schmitz. "Legal Writing/Legal writing and Language" Contribution to the Course, Methodology of Legal Research and Legal Writing, 2022, pp. 1-2.

research is ever expanding and ever increasing and that subsequent research becomes more and more cutting edge.<sup>31</sup>

### THE FUTURE OF THE PRIVATE AND COMMERCIAL ARCHIVE

In Nigeria today, one sector stands heads and shoulders above all others in the storage, filing and archiving of information both in hard copy and soft digitally retrieved copies and that sector is the Banking and Finance Sector. One reason for this is to stand indemnified and above fault or reproach in the event of a lawsuit by a client or customer. Due to this very important concern, the information gathering process is very tedious, detailed and rigorous. The scenarios of customers and clients complaints are varied and for want of better phraseology schizophrenic. Thus, based on hindsight, the information gathering and storage mechanism in the Banking Industry is constantly being revised and is ever evolving. Close on the heels of the Banking Industry is the Civil Service at both the National and State levels. In some digitally compliant Ministries, Departments and Agencies, within the hour it is possible to request for and have extracted documents, minutes, and gazettes from the 1960's and 1970's. In discussing or elaborating on the future of the Private or commercial archive the question is often asked as to why it is important for commercial enterprises to maintain good, standard records on their staff and their commercial dealings. The world of employment and job search is one rife with a lot of falsification and misleading claims. The average young job seeker in Nigeria would be quick to tell you that most admirable and juicy job portfolios are advertised for people with significant years of work experience and years of sterling, cognate service. Since work experience is a requirement for good well-paying jobs, the desperate and impulsive are wont to falsify their work experience or even their academic credentials. Thus any commercial organization worth its salt usually maintains a good verification mechanism and a good archive that stores discreetly information about its staff and its daily organizational dealings. This helps with documentation, proof of track record claims, evidence against legal liability and documented information that helps staff with referencing needs in future places of employment. It is thus important that any reasonably sizeable place of employment maintain decent and accurate records on its daily, monthly, quarterly, bi-annual and annual business dealings.<sup>32</sup>

As is the case in countries of the West, the Nigertian business environment is becoming rife with lawsuits. There have been series of claims and counter claims and a multitude of people who have sought redress when they have felt that they received the short end of the stick in a business transaction. The graph in terms of libelous, slanderous and lawsuits around breach of contract is bound to spiral upwards as are precautions by those who run business establishments. The end product is that business practice will get better and better, and establishments will defer more and more to serving customer needs. This hence indicates that there is a serious and vibrant future for the private and commercial archive. This archives in the employment world, in the business world and in the world of Academics must bridge the gap between the old Paper dominated archive and the new digitally enhanced Archive. Thus, while not completely abandoning paper documentation, these archives must work towards having important information and background data available on demand. In the scenario of the banks, the student studying Business Management, Accounting, Marketing or Banking and Finance has a veritable source of primary sources and even secondary sources when conducting research, comparing statistics, demographics and other such data. With the way all sorts of information is currently gathered in the Banking Industry researchers are often sure that there

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> E. J. Alagoa "Interdisciplinary Approach to African History in Nigeria". *Presence Africaine*, no. 94, 1975, pp. 1-13.

is but a little margin of error in their computation and analysis. This in turn helps to make research in Finance and Management very wholistic and balanced.<sup>33</sup>

It is on record and can be scientifically proven that employees are less likely to elope when they know that their employer has sufficient background information on them. In most sizeable organizations the process of constantly collecting information on their staff and prospective employees is known as documentation and naturally implies that the collection and verification of relevant information and documents on the staff and prospective employee. This information when transmitted to a new employee can be the fodder that decides the employment decision. This in essence, is the idea behind the employment referencing system where employers, especially banks in Nigeria diligently confirm information from previous employers of labour and institutions of higher learning. In the event of a crime that was committed incognito these records can help investigative organizations like Directorate of State Security (DSS), State Criminal Investigation Department (State CID), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) and International Police (Interpol). In a review on the bust of cold financial fraud files on Crime Investigation Series on DSTV, Many a times, it was the profiling of all suspected parties that something in the past of one or two individuals indicated who the likely perpetrator could be.<sup>34</sup>

It can thus be stated that the encouragement of the continuous improvement of the commercial and private archive is in the general interest of the entire society. There is an interesting story of the reconstruction of a Man's life that is worth recounting. In the view of the researcher, Professor Okon Edet Uya is one of the prominent historians ever to emerge in the region East of the Niger (Akwa Ibom State, Cross River State, Rivers and Bayelsa). Professor Uya lectured extensively outside the Country with the University of Wisconsin and Howard University where he became a full tenured Professor. Professor Uya returned to Nigeria to give service and was instrumental in developing the Department of History and International Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. Professor Okon Edet Uya rose to become Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC), produced many outstanding historians and administrators and lectured extensively in a number of universities notably the University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. In view of Professor Uya's academic intellectual acumen he was appointed Ambassador Plenipotentiary to four nations in South America and a while later he was appointed chairman of Nigeria's National Electoral Council (NEC). Professor Okon Edet Uya left the world as an accomplished academic, scholar and Public Servant.

For the prestigious Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree at the University of Wisconsin, Professor Okon Uya wrote on Robert Smalls a slave who rose from the throes of Slavery to Public Service in the United States of America. Professor Okon Uya conducted his Ph.D studies in the period after Nigeria's independence (after 1960) while slavery was abolished in the United States of America (USA) in the 17th century. When it was time however for Professor Okon Edet Uya in the 20th Century to dig into the life and times of Robert Smalls it was possible partly because of very well documented and archived information and Professor Uya's research and biographical skills. Professor Uya embarked on the research after training from the likes of Professor Jan Van Sina and was able to produce a work where the manuscript was

<sup>33</sup> E. S. Abd-Elal., S. H. P. W. Gamage., J. E. Mills. "Assisting academics to identify computer generated writing". *European Journal of Engineering Education*. 47). <https://doi.org/10.1080/03043797.2022.2046709>, 2002, pp. 725-745.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*



requested for publication even before the completion of the work. Professor Uya's work was eventually published into a book titled "Robert Smalls: From Slavery to Public Service" by Oxford University Press. Countless thousands subsequently read the work and gleaned important information from it. Among the lessons learnt from this groundbreaking work was that it was possible with determination and grit to rise above any encumbrance to achieve your goals and ambition. All this was possible partly because of the existence of well detailed records.<sup>35</sup>

It is in the interest of retaining Nigeria's collective history that detailed and rigorous archives should be developed and encouraged. The pleasant, intended consequence of course would be that generations yet unborn can take a pleasant cursory backward look and with a little bit of analysis get answers to knotty problems especially questions such as how they arrived where they are and the way forward. Reconstruction such as the one conducted by Professor Okon Edet Uya would be made possible for those with the prerequisite skills and with each passing generation historical discourse<sup>36</sup> and interpretation will become richer and fuller. It is also important for the Museums that house countless display of our rich and unique cultural heritage be kept in pristine condition and be funded for their maintenance and upkeep. This will go a long way in preserving our collective past and ensure that generation after generation has a sense of belonging.

## CONCLUSION

It can thus be stated that a healthy combination of primary and secondary sources where these are available make for a balanced work. Primary sources are closer to the originating source and thus help give the work a strong objective base while Secondary sources are distilled information and more readily available and usually important for arriving at a specific point of analysis. Primary sources include Oral sources from eyewitnesses, archeological and archival materials while secondary sources include textbooks, journal articles, internet sources, newspapers etcetera. This paper posits that in the 21st Century it is important to bridge the gap between archival sources and the new digitalized sources that are more popular with the younger generation. This paper also posits that it is important for lecturers, tutors and academics to be familiar with the new wave of Artificial Intelligence softwares and websites now readily available to students to be able to track and stop new variants of Academic fraud.

It is noted by the researcher that overreliance on Artificial Intelligence softwares and websites tend to breed laziness, a lack of initiative and deprive the students of invaluable opportunities in the Arts and humanities to develop the power of analysis. Thus, in the long run, students who rely heavily on these softwares are at a loss and are unwittingly shortchanging themselves. It is hence advised that heavy use of these softwares be limited to senior and mature scholars. These tools, in the hands of a mature scholar can see an amazing amount of work completed. It is advisable that Lecturers and academics become familiar with these applications not just for the work benefit they can derive from it but to also be able to track academic fraud and plagiarism.

This paper also discusses the future of the private and commercial archive making reference to the pioneering work of Professor Okon Edet Uya on Robert Smalls a black slave that rose

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<sup>35</sup> E. S. Abd-Elal., S. H. P. W., Gamage., J. E. Mills. "Assisting academics to identify computer generated writing". pp. 725-745

<sup>36</sup> Nkereuwem David Edemekong and Ubong James Essien. "Conflict and Historical Studies in Nigeria, 1999 – 2019". *Fuwukari Journal of Politics and Development*, vol. 7, no. 2, (November 2023), pp. 73-83.

from the hardship and throes of Slavery to Public Service. The research was undertaken several years after Robert Smalls had passed on but it was still possible to get a reasonably objective account because there were a number of archives and well preserved records and documents that made the reconstruction. The private and commercial archive thus has a prominent and vibrant future in Nigeria. With regards to the already existing National Archives, it was stated that there should be ease of access after due verification was conducted on the researcher

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