THE USE OF ONLINE LEARNING TOOLS IN OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper discusses the utilisation of online learning tools in Open distance education in Nigeria as well as the various benefits embedded in using them. The flexibility and interactive nature of online learning has made learning attractive and effective in career advancement by increasing the education accessibility of students and making faculty members better prepared to work in the digital age. In essence, it broadens access to education for all, aids good teaching and enhances learners' academic achievement in distance learning institutions. Therefore, there is the need for provision and utilisation of online learning tools to bridge the gap of physical and psychological separation between learners and tutors. The paper, therefore, examines the concept and features of distance education, concept of online learning, online learning tools and its effects in distance education delivery, challenges in the use of online tools in open distance learning and justification for the use of online learning tools in open distance learning in Nigeria. The paper concludes with recommendations on the importance of the use of online learning tools for sustainability of open and distance learning growth and development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Online Learning, Tools, Open Learning, Distance Learning

Introduction

The emergence and proliferation of new information and communication technologies (ICT), has introduced an unstoppable revolution into education particularly in the areas of teaching and learning. The internet and the web have further raised the revolutionary tempo especially through the enhancement of e-learning. For most open and distance learning providers, e-learning had added another dimension to the issue of access. While Open and Distance Learning, ODL, itself is hailed by nations as bailing them out of the problem of providing access to education to the masses, e-learning is further extending the frontiers by further removing distance from education and helping individuals who can, to access education anywhere, anytime, at their own pace and at any place.

The use of online learning tools has raised the level of education practice in recent times. Today, it has become an integral aspect, and a popular tool, in the broader landscape of higher education. The flexibility and interactive nature of online learning makes it highly effective in career advancement by increasing the education accessibility of students and making faculty members better prepared

to work in the digital age. However, despite the increasing benefits of online tools in classrooms and outside the classroom (online), many Nigerian institutions either fail to see the potential of these various online tools or they choose to ignore their utilisation.

As a result of this, learning in many higher institutions has been reduced to rote learning. Learners are forced to learn by memorising learning content through mechanical repetition, usually by hearing and repeating aloud, without the intention to comprehend or understand the meaning. In most cases, these can be attributed to ignorance, financial constraints in investing in online tools or a dearth of professionally trained and skilled tutors/facilitators for the use of these many online learning tools.

Concept and Features of Open Distance Learning

Distance learning is defined by Greenberg (1998) as "a planned teaching/learning experience that uses a wide spectrum of technologies to reach learners at a distance and is designed to encourage learners' interaction and certification of learning. Teaster and Blieszner (1999) declared that "distance learning has been applied to many instructional methods: however, its primary distinction is that the teacher and the learners are separated in space and possibly time". Keegan (1995) provided the most comprehensive definition of distance learning when he asserted that "this form of learning results from the technological separation of teacher and learners which frees the student from the necessity of traveling to a fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a fixed person, in order to be trained". Implicit in these definitions are:

i. Distance learning is a planned teaching or learning activity.
ii. There is physical separation of the learners from the teachers
iii. Distance learning is carriedout through a wide range of technology
iv. It promotes more of learners' interaction, that is, it is learner-centred

Besides, Jeffris, Teaster and Blieszner (1999) defined open learning as: "any form of learning in which the provider (e.g. an institution or organization)... enables individual learners to exercise choice over any one or more of a number of aspects of learning." Typically, this involves helping learners take responsibility for aspects such as what they learn, how they learn, where they learn, how quickly they learn, who to turn to for help and when and where to have their learning assessed.

Open Learning eludes a precise definition and that it evokes wide response from educationists. The decision of the United Kingdom government, in the mid-1960s, to rename the 'University of the Air', the 'Open University', popularized the term 'Open'. However, the basic characteristics of open learning are:

i. It does not have closed enrolment procedure(s) that is; there are no specific requirements for enrolment; for example, making it compulsory for prospective candidates to have certain number of credits in certain subjects before enrolment.
ii. It does not have closed or rigid structures in academic and administrative contexts.
iii. It is very quick to respond to

community education needs since any kind of programme can be instituted and no entry requirements.

iv. It does not have cut-off dates for assignment submission.
v. It does not have fixed assessment patterns.
vi. Other views or interpretations, including that of the course authors are accommodated when it comes to presentation of didactic materials.
vii. Students who cannot attend compulsory group meetings are not closed out.
viii. It enables learners to learn when they want to learn, how they want to learn, and what they want to learn. In essence, flexibility is the key word in open learning.

Open and Distance learning

Jeffris, Teaster and Blieszner (1999) defined and analysed open and distance learning as a form of education with the following characteristics:

- Open and Distance learning is a planned teaching or learning activity.
- In Open and Distance learning, face-to-face group-based communication is absent either wholly or substantially; that is, there is physical separation of the learners from the teachers in time and space.
- In Open and Distance learning, there may be or there may not be enrolment criteria
- In Open and Distance learning, teaching and learning activities are carried-out through a wide range of technology ranging from print, audio, video, and computer based technologies.
- Open and Distance Learning emphasises more of learning than teaching. That is, it is learner-centred since it promotes more of learners' interaction.
- Open and Distance Learning encourages the application of flexible learning principles and assessment patterns.

Based on the above submissions, there is, therefore, the need to find answers to the following questions in order to ensure quality delivery of distance education in the 21st century in Nigeria:

1. How far are we in the planning of distance learning/teaching in Nigeria?
2. How do we bridge the physical and psychological separation of learners from tutors?
3. At what capacity do we make provision for wide spectrum of technologies to reach learners at distance?
4. At what level do we make provision for online course materials for learners against hard copy materials?
5. How do we make learning flexible and attractive for distance learners in Nigeria?

Attempting to find possible solutions to the above questions and find balance between how learners learn, when they want to learn, how they want to learn, and what they want to learn calls for full integration of various online learning tools. Though in recent time, most distance learning institutions in Nigeria have stepped-up in their operations, notably, among them are: Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan and National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The mode of delivery of

instructions in the two heavily relies on the following:

- Printed Material
- Audio-tapes, videotapes
- CD-ROMs
- Radio and Television broadcast
- Computer – mediated learning

The computer – mediated learning category in National Open University of Nigeria comprises The NOUN i-Learn Website and NOUN i-Learn Mobile application while Distance Learning Centre, University of Ibadan comprises DLC online learning and DLC visual classroom (Directorate of Computer and Networking Services, NOUN Lagos & ICT unit, DLC, University of Ibadan, 2019).

Apart from the above efforts by the two institutions there are many more online learning tools untapped. Against this background, this paper aims' to examine the role of online learning tools in ensuring quality delivery and learners' retention in distance learning programme in Nigeria.

Concept of Online Learning

The term "online learning" can be used to refer to a wide range of programmes that use the Internet to provide instructional materials and facilitate interactions between teachers and students and in some cases among students as well. Online learning can be fully online, with all instructions taking place through the Internet, or online elements can be combined with face-to-face interactions in what is known as blended learning (Horn&Staker, 2011).

Rosenberg (2001) defines learning as "the process by which people acquire new skills or knowledge for the purpose of enhancing their performance". He explains that the perceptions of learning in organisations are undergoing a distinct transformation. First, training should no longer only focus on the act of training but must demonstrate a positive impact on performance or outcomes. As the world is changing, the learning scenario is changing with the change in the introduction of information and communication technology, which gives room to the new concept called e-learning. In his book, Rosenberg (2001) defines e-learning as a networked phenomenon allowing for instant revisions and feedback. In addition, it is delivered using standard Internet technology. E-learning goes beyond training and instruction to the delivery of information and tools to improve performance. As online learning has become more pervasive, the learning theories around it have evolved. Most authors, not only (Benson, 2002; Carliner, 2004; Conrad, 2002, Ally, 2004) define online learning in terms of the access to learning experiences but also on the potential for flexibility and participants' interaction.

Online Learning Tools

Online learning tools are tools used for pedagogical and andragogical purposes that utilize social software and/or social media in order to facilitate learning through interactions between individuals and systems (Appana, 2008). The idea of setting up "online learning tools" is to make education more convenient and widespread. It also allows an interaction between users and/or the software which can bring a different aspect to learning. People can acquire knowledge by distance learning tools, for instance, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Zoom, Kahoot, Google

drive, Google forms, Moodle and Khan Academy and so on (Appana, 2008).

Online learning tools may mediate in formal or informal learning environments to help create connections between learners, instructors and information. These connections form dynamic knowledge networks. Online learning tools are used in schools for teaching/learning. Within a school environment, the use of online learning tools can affect not only the user (learner) but his/her administrator as well as his/her instructor. It brings a different approach to the traditional way of learning which affects the student and his/her support circle (Hewett, et al.2007).

Online learning tools are used for people who are willing to share their good ideas/thoughts with someone else. The ideas can be related to either the academic studies or any other daily skills that they want to share with others. Online learning tools connect learning to our daily lives. It creates a learning environment more conducive to today's society (Hewett, et al.2007)

Effects of online Learning Tools in Distance Delivery

The perverseness of online social networking enables learners to interact with others on the internet in real time, while new learning uses of web application can be used to enhance their digital media skills. Digital tools such as blogs, videos, and image editors can be incorporated into the collaborative online environment and used in conjunction with Social Networking services (SNS). Therefore, learners are not only retrieving any ready web content, but are all creating content and providing feedback to others (Solomon & Schrum, 2010).

The emergence, growth and use of SNSs are rising not only among the general population but also among higher education students (adult learners) (Boyd and Ellison, 2007). Andrews, Tynan and Backstrom (2012) claim that some distance education learners are actively and deliberately using popular, non-institutional social media tools to augment and improve their learning experiences. For instance, Özmen and Atıcı (2014) found that distance education students have positive attitudes towards the use of social networking sites, which positively affect the quality of communication between instructors and students and their academic performance. Callaghan and Fribbance (2016) examined Facebook at Open University of UK and found that Facebook can be used to build a community for distance education students. Additionally, a great many instructors and institutions of higher education have started to combine distance education delivery with SNSs (Brady, Holcomb, & Smith, 2010; Ractham, &Firpo, 2011; Roblyer, McDaniel, Webb, Herman, & Witty, 2010; Tess, 2013).

Distance education is generally offered to students through learning management systems (LMSs) in which instruction is delivered in a structured manner (DeSchryver, Mishra, Koehleer, & Francis, 2009; Lee, & McLoughlin, 2010; West, Waddoups, & Graham, 2006); however, some research findings indicate that these platforms fail to fulfill the social experience which is a significant ingredient of learning (Brady et al, 2010; Lee &McLoughlin, 2010;

Mazman&Usluel, 2010; Schroeder, Minocha, & Schneider, 2010; Whitworth, & Benson, 2010).

Accordingly, as a social software, SNSs exist beyond traditional LMSs and potentially open up the learning environment to a public space. By using SNSs and similar Web 2.0 tools in the teaching and learning processes, academic content, discussions and other interactions no longer live in the safe, structured and controlled world of academia, but rather they become accessible in online social environments (Rodriguez, 2011). Recent literature indicates that, as a very intensive and collaborative environment in nature, Facebook can be used as an alternative to an LMS (Maleko, Nandi, Hamilton, D'Souza, & Harland, 2013; Wang et al., 2011) with some major advantages over traditional LMSs in promoting collaborative and active learning (Meishar-Tal, Kurtz, & Pieterse, 2012).

Social Networking Services (SNSs) also support formation of virtual communities of practice and enable students to connect, communicate, interact and collaborate on online networks (McCann, 2009). Additionally, SNSs provide students with the social communication tools that allow for freedom, flexibility, fluidity and digital identity in learning processes (Brady et al., 2010; Lee, &McLoughlin, 2010; Webb, 2009). Other studies have shown that social media not only increased interest and engagement but also creativity.

Challenges in the Use of Online Tools in Open Distance Learning in Nigeria

Anene, Imam and Odumuh (2014), reported that "the prospect of higher education in Nigeria in the near future relies on educational technologies". Recently, technology enhanced learning, including distance and online instruction, is being recognised as a viable tool necessary for preparing citizens to participate in the technologically driven global environment. However, research evidence has shown that Nigerian Universities are still lagging behind in the current information technology move. The environment necessary for the achievement and development of the ICT in Higher Institution, corporate and other areas of the economy are yet untapped. While there is growing demand for e-learning and the use of online learning tools in the delivery of content for learners, there are many challenges in the effective utilisation of online learning tools which includes lack of knowledge in the use of computer by both learners and tutors while some are just beginning to know how to access their e-mail and some do not even have an email address. The technical infrastructure in developing countries is not highly developed, which means that phone-lines and Internet connections are unreliable or slow due to narrow bandwidth. Low literacy level in computer technology among personnel as well as inadequate training of staff in institutions especially related to educational technology are serious problems yet to be tackled. Again, there is deficit of well-furnished/equipped e-learning centres, dearth of skilled manpower for implementation and

management and incessant interruption of power supply (Anene, et al. 2014).

Justification for the Use of Online Learning Tools in Open Distance Learning

In the course of this discourse, it has been established that the educational opportunities in the conventional system are not adequate for the needs of the time. What is required is a system that would provide access to education according to the choice and needs of learners. This, according to Woodman (2003), is possible only if the educational system is productive, flexible and accessible to all categories of people. The traditional system is not able to withstand these demands and challenges because it has not been designed on those lines. Thus, the Open Distance Learning (ODL) for higher education provides the answer.

ODL as a model with its characteristics is capable of meeting the growing demands of the unreached, disadvantaged and neglected prospective learners, and other challenges of education because of its:

- capacity to provide much desired need-based, work-based and employment-based education to all categories of people in accordance with their choice of pace, process, place, priority and programme of learning
- potential to offer quality-based uniform learning at all levels and standards;
- recruitment of staff who understand the rudiment ODL and understand the learners
- develop course materials written in open and distance learning format
- unique methodology of teaching/learning through the use of multi-media system; and
- Cost-effectiveness in comparison with the conventional system of classroom teaching.

(Rekkedal, 2003).

Thus, this is in line with Woodman's (2003) submission with the four fundamental aspects of the ODL which he groups as:

- Access to learning and learning opportunities
- Access to educational and other academic resources
- Access to collaborative learning and interactions
- Access to expertise

Therefore, to keep pace with the world-wide trend in Scientific and technological advancements, continuous innovation, particularly in higher education demands among learners, accessibility through the open distance learning with focus essentially on:

- its access and equity;
- its linkage with employment and work; and
- its relevance to utilisation of resources and to the national policies.

In order to achieve the above potentials of online learning tools in distance education, there is therefore, the need to take into consideration all aspects of online learning environment. These include continuous internet bandwidth update, use of all online learning tools and social media applications among others.

Recommendations on the Use of Online Learning Tools in Distance Education Delivery in Nigeria

Based on the numerous advantages of the use of online learning tools in distance education delivery, it is imperative to recommend the following online learning tools as some of the leading tools in distance education delivery worldwide:

Twitter

Twitter (www.twitter.com) has been used as a pedagogical tool in both undergraduate and graduate courses. Junco, et al. (2011) utilized the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to study the effect that Twitter had on student engagement and grades.

Twitter was found to not only increase learners' engagement and improved grades but it also increased interaction with peers and instructors for deeper interpersonal connections. Similarly, Dunlap, et al. (2009) found that using Twitter in classroom environments allowed students' interactions to be natural and immediate, enabled social presence, continued conversations after the semester, and allowed for the construction of meaning through communication. Using this SNS, relationships were fostered, ideas were shared, and social connectedness was formed between adult learners, their peers and their instructors in education.

A prominent feature of social media is the hash tag (represented as #). Originally popularised on Twitter, hashtags are ways to categorise posts (Greenhow &Gleason, 2012). Users can search for posts by using hashtags and see all of the posts that share that particular hashtag. In education, when learners use hashtags to categorise and search for course-related posts, communication between learners is traceable within those posts both in the classroom and online. This allows students to interact with each other and their posts in real-time, thus putting the learners in the positions of co-authors as they engage with each other's posts, adding comments and hashtags of their own (Arizpe &Styles, 2008; Moje, 2009).

Edmodo

Edmodo is an educational website that takes the ideas of social network and refined them and make it appropriate for a classroom. Using edmodo, students and teachers can reach out to one another and connect by sharing ideas, problems, and helpful tips. Instructors can assign and grade work on Edmodo; learners are carried along with the class on edmodo. It is a safe environment. There is no bullying or inappropriate content, because the instructor can see everything that is posted on Edmodo.

The platform creates a safe and secured environment where learners and instructors can create a classroom group for themselves. In these virtual groups they can;

1. Place digital resources on Edmodo for learners to access or download to improve their performance in the class.
2. Create polls for learners to vote
3. Write short summaries of every lesson the learners are exposed to in the class which increaseslearners' retention and influences their academic performance.
4. Post about assignment information.

WhatsApp Messenger

WhatsApp Messenger is a freeware, cross-platform messaging and Voice over IP (VoIP) service owned by Facebook, Inc. It allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other media. WhatsApp's client application runs on mobile devices but is also accessible from desktop computers, as long as the user's mobile device remains connected to the Internet while they use the desktop app.

Whatsapp messenger is a proprietary cross-platform instant messaging subscription service for Smartphone's and selected feature phones that uses the internet for communication. In addition to text messaging, learners can create learning group or class group to send messages, lecture images, video, and audio media messages which they will be able to engage and interact with their peers about a programme or about an assignment and also they are able to bring in their experiences and relate with one another through the group chats. The client application was created by WhatsApp Inc. of Mountain View, California, which was acquired by Facebook in February 2014 for approximately US$ 19.3 billion. It became the world's most popular messaging application by 2015, and has over 1.5 billion users worldwide as of February 2018. It has become the primary means of communication in multiple countries and locations, including Latin America, India, Pakistan and large parts of Europe, including the United Kingdom, Spain, and France.

Facebook

Facebook allows anyone who claims to be at least 13 years old to become a registered userof the website. Users must register before using the site, after which they may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, exchange messages, and receive automatic notifications when they update their profile (Roblyer 2010). Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups organised in workplace, school or college, or other characteristics, and categorise their friends into lists such as "learners from school" or "Close Friends in school" (Rapacki, 2007).

YouTube (www.youtube.com)

YouTube is an American video-sharing platform headquartered in San Bruno, California. Three former PayPal employees—Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim—created the service in February 2005. Google bought the site in November 2006 for US$1.65 billion; YouTube now operates as one of Google's subsidiaries. YouTube allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add to playlists, report, comment on videos, and subscribe to other users. It offers a wide variety of user-generated and corporate media videos. Available content includes video clips, TV show clips, music videos, short and documentary films, audio recordings, movie trailers, live streams, and other content such as video blogging, short original videos, and educational videos.

This video platform is seen both as a key learning resource as well as a place for anyone to share their own video content. YouTube took the first place in 2019's list as it had done in the last 3 years. It is available online, its cost is free unless you

want to upgrade to its premium package with few benefits (Hurley, et al. 2005).

Google Drive/Docs (google.com/docs)

Google Drive is a file storage and synchronisation service developed by Google. Launched on April 24, 2012, Google Drive allows users to store files on their servers, synchronise files across devices, and share files. In addition to a website, Google Drive offers apps with offline capabilities for Windows and macOS computers, and Android and iOS smartphones and tablets. Google Drive encompasses Google Docs, Google Sheets, and Google Slides, which are a part of an office suite that permits collaborative editing of documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, forms, and more. Files created and edited through the office suite are saved in Google Drive.

Google Drive offers users 15 gigabytes of free storage through Google One. Google One also offers 100 gigabytes, 200 gigabytes, 2 terabytes, 10 terabytes, 20 terabytes, and 30 terabytes offered through optional paid plans. Files uploaded can be up to 5 terabytes in size.

Users can change privacy settings for individual files and folders, including enabling sharing with other users or making content public. On the website, users can search for an image by describing its visuals. and use natural language to find specific files, such as "finds my budget spreadsheet from last December". The website and Android app offer a Backups section to see what Android devices have data backed up to the service, and a completely overhauled computer app released in July 2017 allows for backing up specific folders on the user's computer. A Quick Access feature can intelligently predict the files users' need. Google Drive is a key component of G Suite, Google's monthly subscription offering for businesses and organizations. As part of select G Suite plans, Drive offers unlimited storage, advanced file audit reporting, enhanced administration controls, and greater collaboration tools for teams. Google Docs is used to create documents, Google Sheets for spreadsheets, and Google Slides for slide sets – individually or collaboratively.

Zoom (zoom.us)

Zoom Video Communications is a company headquartered in San Jose, California that provides remote conferencing services using cloud computing. Zoom offers communications software that combines video conferencing, online meetings, chat, and mobile collaboration. Zoom has free and premium versions. Zoom was founded in 2011 by a lead engineer from Cisco Systems and its collaboration business unit, WebEx. The founder, Eric Yuan, graduated from Stanford University executive programme and was previously vice president of engineering at Cisco for collaboration software development. David Berman, from WebEx and Ring Central, became president in November 2015. The service started in January 2013 and by May 2013, it claimed one million participants. During the first year of its release, Zoom established partnerships with B2B collaboration software providers. Its partnership with Redbooth (at the time known as Teambox) played a role in adding a video component to Redbooth. Shortly after this partnership, Zoom created a programme named "Works with Zoom", which established partnerships with multiple hardware and

software vendors such as Logitech, Vaddio, and InFocus. Towards the end of the year, Zoom managed to have its software integrated into Interview Stream, a company that provides remote video interviewing capacity to employers. Interview Stream expanded their video interviewing capabilities using Zoom's video services (Yuan, 2011).

Google Forms (google.com/forms)

Google Forms is a tool that allows collecting information from users via a personalised survey or quiz. The information is then collected and automatically connected to a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is populated with the survey and quiz responses. The Forms service has undergone several updates over the years. New features include, but are not limited to menu search, shuffle of questions for randomised order, limiting responses to once per person, shorter URLs, custom themes, automatically generating answer suggestions when creating forms, and an "Upload file" option for users answering questions that require them to share content or files from their computer or Google Drive.

The upload feature is only available through G Suite. In October 2014, Google introduced add-ons for Google Forms, that enable third-party developers to make new tools for more features in surveys. Google forms was released on February 2008. With Google Forms you can create and analyse surveys right in your web browser—no special software is required. It is free to use and accessible online.

Moodle (moodle.org)

Moodle is a free and open-source learning management system (LMS) written in PHP and distributed under the General Public License. Developed on pedagogical principles, Moodle is used for blended learning, distance education, flipped classroom and other e-learning projects in schools, universities, workplaces and other sectors. Moodle was originally developed by Martin Dougiamas to help educators create online courses with a focus on interaction and collaborative construction of content, and it is in continual evolution. Martin Dougiamas, who has graduate degrees in computer science and education, wrote the first version of Moodle. Dougiamas started a Ph.D. to examine "the use of open source software to support a social constructionist epistemology of teaching and learning within Internet-based communities of reflective inquiry." Although how exactly social constructivism makes Moodle different from other eLearning platforms is difficult to show, it has been cited as an important factor by Moodle adopters. Other Moodle adopters, such as the Open University in the UK, have pointed out that Learning Management Systems can equally be seen as "relatively pedagogy-neutral".

The first version of Moodle was released on 20 August 2002. Nowadays the Moodle Project is led and coordinated by Moodle HQ, an Australian company of 50 developers which is financially supported by a network of eighty-four Moodle Partner service companies worldwide. Moodle's development has also been assisted by the work of open-source programmers. It is very easy to use. You can go to Demo and everything is available, you can easily get the features which you can implement in your education portal as per requirement. To explore the demo site,

log in with the role of student or teacher or manager or parent or privacy officer or others. Moodle as a learning platform can enhance existing learning environments. As an E-learning tool, Moodle has a wide range of standard and innovative features such as a calendar and a Gradebook. Moodle is a leading virtual learning environment and can be used in many types of environments such as education, training and development and in business settings.

The acronym Moodle stands for modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment. (In the early years the "m" stood for "Martin's", named after Martin Dougiamas, the original developer). As well as being an acronym, the name was chosen because of the dictionary definition of Moodle and to correspond to an available domain name (Dougiamas, 2002).

Kahoot! (getkahoot.com)

Kahoot! is a game-based learning platform, used as educational technology in schools and other educational institutions. Its learning games, "Kahoots", are multiple-choice quizzes that allow user generation and can be accessed via a web browser or the Kahoot app. Kahoot! can be used to review students' knowledge, for formative assessment, or as a break from traditional classroom activities. Kahoot! also includes trivia quizzes. Kahoot was founded by Johan Brand, Jamie Brooker and Morten Versvik in a joint project with the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. They teamed up with Professor Alf Inge Wang and were later joined by Norwegian entrepreneur Åsmund Furuseth. Kahoot! was launched in a private beta at SXSWedu in March 2013 and the beta was released to the public in September 2013.

Kahoot was designed for social learning, with learners gathered around a common screen such as an interactive whiteboard, projector, or a computer monitor. The site can also be used through screen-sharing tools such as Skype, or Google Hangouts. The game design is such that the players are required to frequently look up from their devices. The gameplay is simple; all players connect using a generated game PIN shown on the common screen, and use a device to answer questions created by a teacher, business leader, or other person. These questions can be changed to award points. Points then show up on the leaderboard after each question.

Kahoot has now implemented 'Jumble'. Jumble questions challenge players to place answers in the correct order rather than selecting a single correct answer. It offers a new experience that encourages even more focus from players. Kahoot can be played through different web browsers and mobile devices through its web interface. In March 2017, Kahoot reached one billion cumulative participating players and in the month of May, the company was reported to have 50 million monthly active unique users. In September 2017, Kahoot launched a mobile application for homework (Brand et al., 2013).

Conclusion

With the analysis and discussion above, it is clear that the use of online learning tools has the potentials to meet the education needs of all. Therefore, it is imperative to advocate for full integration of online learning in distance education in Nigeria. This will in turn bring about the desirable changes in learners'

academic achievement, tutors/ facilitators productivity in the digital age and improve distance learning practice in Nigeria.

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