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INTERNET RESOURCES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This research work investigated the relevance of Internet resources on the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West LGA of Edo State of Nigeria. The questionnaire was the instrument; 500 copies were administered, 425 were retrieved and analyzed. The descriptive survey research method was adopted. Findings show that students have access to the Internet. Students access the Internet to keep in touch with friend, get current information, improve their reading habits, and be exposed to global issues; the mostly used Internet resources are Social Media, Search Engines and Electronic Newspapers. The challenges to access to the Internet are cost and speed, lack of proper training/guidance on how to use the Internet. The use of Internet resources have improved their performance during test and examination. Nonetheless, the use of Internet resources have not helped them to learn self-study skills, develop information seeking skills, nor develop life-long learning skills The research recommends that students should be properly trained and constantly guided on the profitable use of the Internet and its resources for their academic pursuits; also mobile telecommunication companies should make Internet access cheaper, as well as faster so that students can access the Internet for their academic works.

Key words: Internet, Internet Resources, Academic Performance, Esan West, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the Internet has opened countless new opportunities for students. In fact, it has given a very open approach to education where students are no longer dependent on their teachers or textbooks as their only sources of information. With the Internet in vogue, students are no longer limited to what is in the school library, nor do they have to wait for books to come into the school library. According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project (2015), Internet use is a staple of college students' educational experience as they use it to communicate with professors and classmates, to do research and to access library materials. For most of them it is a functional tool, one that has greatly changed the way they interact with others and with information as they go about their studies. Thus, the Internet broadens students' horizons beyond their local boundaries (of home and neighborhood school) and provides an environment in which its impact may be immeasurable.

The Internet is a global network of computers linked together over large distances. It was created by the American military as a means of communication and has been in existence since the 1950s (Osunade, 2019). Up until the mid and late 1980s mainly commercial organizations and educational institutions used the Internet. This was due to high costs. The rapid development of technology has seen improvement in communication links and a lowering of costs. The implication is that the Internet is now more widely available to more people. The availability and the process by which an effort to use the Internet through an electronic communications system is carried out is referred to as Internet access. The Internet promises to have a far larger and more serious impact on our society than the introduction of television; possibly as great an influence on history as the industrial revolution or the printing press (The UCLA Internet Report, 2017). According to Ojedokun (2021), it has broken down barriers of communication and information access from anywhere in the world. It is fast, reliable and does not have restrictions on content or format; it also has a limitless range of facilities, which assist users to access almost infinite amounts of information. It offers the opportunity for access to up-to-date research reports and knowledge globally. It has thus become an important component of electronic services in academic institutions. More reason, Bakare and Bakare (2021) affirmed it as a veritable source of providing unhindered library services to clienteles irrespective of time, means and location due to the ubiquity of these technologies.

The field of secondary education has been affected by Internet access, which has undoubtedly affected teaching, learning, and research (Yusuf, 2021). Education is a fundamental human

process which is; a matter of values and action. The cluster of technologies called the "Internet" has the ability to complement, reinforce, and to enhance the educational process. The Internet has come to befriend, dwell with, and live beyond, both, the teacher and the student; as the African wisdom says, "It takes an entire village to raise a child". Internet usage and world population statistics for March 31, 2011 showed that 5.7% of the population in Africa uses the Internet which is the second lowest in the world, while Asia statistics showed the highest with 44% of Internet use (Internet World Stats, 2011). In Nigeria, very few schools can pride themselves on the use of Internet in the teaching – learning process as Ukpebor and Emwanta (2018) revealed in their analysis that the level of Internet access in schools is very poor. This is because the majority of the schools studied do not have access to the Internet and while few who does, do not frequently allow students to have access to the technology.

Considering the fact that Internet use by students at secondary school level is yet to be formerly recognized as a means of improving academic performances, because curriculum developers underestimate its importance at that level, students' problems are further compounded, as they do not have the full capacity to use the Internet and understanding of its usage for academic purpose (Ukpebor & Emwanta, 2018). Students are not taught information, computer and Internet literacy skills in schools, while digital divide remains a succeeding factor in developing nations. However, Olatokun (2018) averred that many private schools can boast of computer laboratory, but only few can pride themselves on Internet connectivity. The cost of access points and connections to the Internet is a source of concern to secondary school students and private school owners respectively. With the rapid advancement in Information Communications Technology (ICT) and a decline in the price of computers, information sources have become affordable to students both in print form and online (Ukpebor & Emwanta, 2018). The questions that arise are; Do schools in Esan West LGA have computers and Internet access? What is the frequency of access to the Internet? In what ways are Internet resources relevant to the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West LGA? Individuals in the 21st century must have the ability to access information, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources. These sources include the computer and Internet. As a result of this, students increasingly utilize the Internet to do research on their own initiative, and satisfy their other forms of information needs. Most unguarded students forego the importance of the Internet as it contributes to their academic work, and decide using it for fraudulent activities such as internet fraud, mobile bullying, as well as immoral acts such as accessing pornographic and other related materials on the net.

The importance of ICT is quite evidence from the educational perspective. Though the chalkboard, maker board, textbooks, radio/television and film have been used for educational purpose over the years, none has quite impacted on the educational process like the computer (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen & Iyamu, 2021). The main purpose of ICT consists just in the development of human mental resources, which allow people to both successfully apply the existing knowledge and produce new knowledge. With the rapid growth of the Internet, many educational institutions began to use the Internet as a new medium to assist the teaching, research and many activities. Using the Internet in teaching and research makes the communication between the students and the teacher more convenient and interesting. Especially, using web in teaching and research makes it available for the students who prefer or require learning outside the classroom to study at their convenient time and space. The web has already been one of the most popular media for the delivering of information. Furthermore, because of the attractive characteristics of the Internet, some secondary school teachers are trying to use web to assist in interactive teaching, research and learning in recent years. The use of the Internet for interactive teaching and learning is relatively recent, as the first materials appeared in the early 1990's. The impact, however, has been considerable, mainly because the technology has advantages over the previous generations of computers (Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 2010).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the 21st century where importance is placed on information, and where there are a lot of information available to information seekers; finding the right information at the time it is needed is crucial to the survival of every student, even those in secondary schools. With the acceptance and wide use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), the Internet being the most important, the volume of available information has increase geometrically. The regular increase in available information has made the retrieval of accurate information problematic for information seekers. A large fraction of information seekers are secondary school students and they seek information for school works and assignments. Since most information hosting platform have been digitalized and hosted in online platforms, the need for access to the Internet cannot be downplayed. However, several researchers like Jeffrey, et. al (2016), Maharana and Mishira (2017), Okon, Etuk and Akpan (2019) have found out that many secondary school students in Africa lack access to the Internet.

Also, the researcher has noticed in his interactions with some secondary school students in Ekpoma (Esan West LGA Capital) that some of them do not have access to the Internet for

various reasons. Despite the fact that access to the Internet can go a long way in helping them academically; this observation was a major factor that necessitated this research study. A lot of researches have been conducted and many more of such researches are done currently on the relevance of Internet resources to the academic performance of secondary school students. Some of these researchers have however focused on international communities, leaving out Nigeria; while some other researches that were conducted in Nigeria have been focused on study populations outside Edo State. Also, some more researches have been conducted in Edo State on the relevance of Internet resources to the academic performance of students, but such researches have focused on different study populations from secondary school students. It is to this backdrop that this research intends to investigate the relevance of Internet resources to the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West LGA of Edo State. This research intends to fill this gap in knowledge.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The overall objective is to investigate how Internet resources affect the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West Local Government Area of Edo State. The specific objectives are to:

- determine the types of internet resources used by secondary school students in Esan West LGA
- 2. find out the purposes for which secondary school students in Esan West LGA access Internet resources.
- 3. find out the challenges to the access of Internet resources by secondary school students in Esan West LGA.
- 4. find out the relevance of Internet resources in the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West LGA.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1. What are the types of internet resources used by secondary school students in Esan West LGA?
- 2. For what purposes do secondary school students in Esan West LGA access Internet resources?
- 3. What are the challenges to the access of Internet resources by secondary school students in Esan West LGA?

4. In what ways are Internet resources relevant to the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West LGA?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Internet Resources

The Internet is so far one of the greatest inventions of all time, which has made it possible for us to do lots of things. People can shop in online stores like eBay, communicate with family and friends via Skype or Facebook, watch the latest videos on YouTube, blog and make money from it, and so much more. The Internet has proven to be very useful and has come with lots of advantages. Goldman, Cole and Syer (2020) posited that the Internet is a valuable source of information for students looking for ideas for projects and assignments. With over 50 million web sites on the net, chances are any information however obscure can be found. The only tools required to find this information would be some patience and a search engine.

Although there may be many advantages to be gained from using the Internet as an educational tool there are also many drawbacks. Ojedokun (2021) believed that the Internet can be a very unfriendly environment for first time users, but with frequent use users can get familiar pretty quickly. The amount of information available on the net means that user tend to be side-tracked with a lot of unnecessary useless information. The Internet is heavily dependent on hardware which can be expensive especially as the Internet is constantly evolving. This therefore means to take full advantage of this evolving technology; upgrades in hardware and software are required. With the advent of the Internet education has definitely benefited in more ways than can be mentioned and although it will not take over the traditional methods of education it will continue to play a major part (Osunade, 2019). As the Internet is an inseparable part of today's educational system, the academic institutions increasingly depend on the Internet for educational purposes (Gupta & Sanocki, 2021)

Despite the increase and widespread adoption of the Internet services, there are challenges that are significantly preventing the effective access and usage of Internet services in schools. These challenges might be caused by lack of support from the government, education leaders, and teachers or even the students themselves. Sife (2016) opine that the challenges facing students could be lack or inadequate ICTs infrastructure in secondary schools, lack of awareness among the students, limited power supply, low bandwidth as well as lack or inadequate budget for

adoption of technologies in secondary schools. According to Asongwa and Ezema (2018) in the their study, poor infrastructure is distinguished by, for instance, the regular power cut that brings about the problems in using Internet services in some countries in Africa, particularly East African countries such as Tanzania. They continued by saying that most of these countries especially in rural areas do not have power supply which as a results makes it difficult for secondary schools in those areas have a sustainable or an encouraging technological atmosphere appropriate for Internet services provision. Also, Sedoyeka and Gafufen (2019) indicated that many rural areas in countries that are developing often do lack electricity and have got only basic infrastructure. They continued by stating that this condition affects computer operations hence complicates the access and use of Internet services as well. In addition, Ukon, Wogu and Obayi (2018) said that in order to integrate computer technology in schools then there must be suitable and sufficient funding that should be provided by the government or international bodies.

Academic Performance

While academic performance may be difficult to measure, it is however seen in the grades obtained by students. The factors that influence academic performance can best be classified as both internal and external factors.

The internal factors are those factors within the individual person or within his/her immediate family. These internal factors, as observed by Egunjobi, Salisu and Ogunkeye (2019), have greater motivating factors on the individual as it propels him/her to pursue a desired career without being influenced. Bakar and Mohamed (2020) and Olamide and Olawaiye (2019) noted too some of these factors include: high income; adventure; serving people to make the world a better place. Love for a particular job can bring job satisfaction to the practitioners. Academic performance is no exception as love, passion and interest are some of the internal factors that can propel someone into being excellent in academic performance (Adanu & Amakuedee, 2020).

Even though the internal factors propel the individual's desire more strongly, there are some external factors also worthy of note, as they too, influences to a great extent, the career choice of people. Among these factors are: peer pressure, entry requirements into university, courses and teachers or counselors (Olamide & Olawaiye, 2019; Egunjobi, et al, 2019; Olawanle & Abayomi, 2017)

METHODOLOGY

The research instrument for data collection used in this research is the questionnaire. Different sections of the questionnaire were adopted from various studies and researchers. The study population comprises of all secondary school students in Esan West LGA, Edo State. The researcher adopted the random sampling technique, and the sample size selected for this research work is 500 students selected from 10 schools, that is, 50 students from each school.

Table 1: Sample Size.

SN	Names of Schools	Number of Students		
1	Emaudo Secondary School 50			
2	Eguare Secondary School	50		
3	Mount Carmel Secondary School	50		
4	Suco Secondary School	50		
5	Deeds Royal Academy	50		
6	Zanna Royal Academy	50		
7	Ambrose Alli Secondary School	50		
8	Austine Beth Secondary School	50		
9	Iruekpen Secondary School	50		
10	Ujoelen Grammer School	50		
	TOTAL	500		

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Of the 500 copies of the questionnaire that were administered to the respondents from the ten (10) schools, 433 were retrieved from the respondents, giving a response rate of 87%. However, only 425 (85%) of those respondents have access to the internet; these were the ones used for the analysis.

Table 2: Access to Internet Connectivity

Research Question	Response	Frequency (Percentage)
Do you have access to	Yes	425 (98.15%)
Internet connectivity?	No	8 (1.85%)
TOTAL		433 (100.00%)

Source: Field Data

Responses from Table 2 reveal that 394 (82.71%) of the respondents have access to Internet connectivity, while 31 (7.29%) do not have access to Internet connectivity.

The respondents have access to Internet connectivity. This finding agrees with those of Adegoke (2019) who posits that over two-third of the students studied have access to the Internet. The research findings also agree with those of Ivwighreghweta and Igere (n.d.), who found out that over 97% of the population of students studies have access to the Internet. The findings also agree with those of Olatokun (2018), Ukpebor and Emwanta (2018) who discovered in the separate researches that secondary school students have access to the Internet, even though the purposes for which they access it may differ.

Research Question 1: What are the types of internet resources used by secondary school students in Esan West LGA?

Table 3: Types of Internet Resources used

S/N	Types of Internet Resources used	True	False
1.	Search engines (Google, Yahoo, etc)	425 (100%)	0 (0%)
2.	Encyclopedias	412 (96.94%)	13 (3.06%)
3.	Social Media (YouTube, Facebook, etc)	425 (100%)	0 (0%)
4.	Electronic Magazine	409 (96.24%)	16 (3.76%)
5.	Electronic Newspaper	421 (99.06%)	4 (0.94%)
6.	Electronic Databases	312 (73.41%)	113 (26.59%)

Source: Field Data

Table 2 reveals that all the respondents use Search Engines (Google, Yahoo) and Social Media (YouTube, Facebook, etc); 412 (96.94%) of the respondents use Encyclopedias; 409 (96.24%) of them use Electronic Magazines; while 421 (99.06%) of them use Electronic Newspaper; and 312 (73.41%) use Electronic Databases.

The type of Internet resources the students use are mainly Search Engines, Social Media and Electronic Newspapers. The findings agree with those of Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2021) who averred that secondary school students are not so much in tune with Databases. Also, the findings are in compliance with Solomon and Obaseki (2018) who observed that youths use more of social media devices in their day to day dealings. The findings also agree with those of Solomon (2018) who stated that many secondary school students in Esan North East Local Government of Edo State use the magazine an information resource when they carry out their searches for assignments.

When students seeking for meaning educational information use social media and general search engines, they will really get any useful information, as they sources of information are often not verifiable and they present subjective views. Little wonder Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2021)

encouraged that for students to excel in this information era, they must be exposed early enough to online databases.

Research Question 2: For what purposes do secondary school students in Esan West LGA access Internet resources?

Table 4: Purpose for accessing the Internet

S/N	Purposes for the access of Internet Resources	True	False
1.	Information for school assignments	312 (73.41%)	113 (26.59%)
2.	Improved Reading Habits	412 (96.94%)	13 (3.06%)
3.	Getting current information	416 (97.88%)	9 (2.12%)
4.	Exposure to global issues	409 (96.24%)	16 (3.76%)
5.	Keeping in touch with friends	421 (99.06%)	4 (0.94%)
6.	Making new friends	368 (86.59%)	57 (13.41%)

Source: Field Data

Table 4 reveals that 312 (73.41%) of the respondents access the Internet to seek information for school assignments; 412 (96.94%) of the respondents access the Internet to improve their reading habits; 416 (97.88%) of them access the Internet to get current information; 409 (96.24%) of the respondents access the Internet to in order that they may be exposed to global issues; 421 (99.06%) of them access the Internet to keep in touch with friend; and 368 (86.59%) of the respondents access the Internet so they can make new friends.

The respondents access the Internet mainly to keep in touch with friend, get current information, improve their reading habits, and be exposed to global issues. This finding complements those of Tarimo and Kavishe (2017) who found out that the reasons why secondary school students in Tanzania access the Internet are to play and download games; and to search for academic information. Olatokun (2018) also reported that secondary school students usually access the Internet because they want read and send e-mail; chat online with old and new friends.

These findings show that students rarely use the Internet and its plethora of resources for academic advancements. Rather, they prefer to embrace the social aspect the Internet offers. Ironically, the Internet which is expected to enhance students' academics is now serving as distraction to them because they focus on the social aspects which are not for academic purposes. It is recommended by Tarimo and Kavishe (2017) that these students should be guided and mentored in the profitable use of the Internet, and learn how to balance studies and play.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges to the access of Internet resources by secondary school students in Esan West LGA?

Table 5: Challenges encountered when accessing Internet Resources?

S/N	Challenges to the access of Internet Resources	True	False
1.	Internet access is too expensive	410 (96.47%)	15 (3.53%)
2.	Slow Internet connectivity	418 (98.35%)	7 (1.65%)
3.	Inadequate time to use the Internet	261 (61.41%)	164 (38.59%)
4.	It is boring to search for resources online	123 (28.94%)	302 (71.06%)
5.	It exposes children to offensive materials	323 (76.00%)	102 (24.00%)
6.	No training/guidance on how to use the Internet	372 (87.53%)	53 (12.47%)

Source: Field Data

Table 5 shows the challenges the respondents encounter when accessing Internet resources. 410 (96.47%) of the respondents are of the view that Internet access is too expensive; 418 (98.35%) of the respondents believe that Internet connectivity is slow; 261 (61.41%) of them believe that there is inadequate time to use the Internet; 123 (28.94%) are of the view that is it boring to search for information online; 323 (76.00%) of the respondents are of the opinion that Internet exposes children to offensive materials; 372 (87.53%) of them believe that they lack training/guidance on how to use the Internet.

The major challenges of accessing Internet resources by secondary school students are that Internet access is too expensive, Internet connectivity is slow, and lack of training/guidance on how to use the Internet. This finding corroborates those of Tarimo and Kavishe (2017), who found out that the reasons students did not access the Internet were because there was lack of skills in Internet browsing, slow Internet speed, inaccessibility of the Internet.

A more profitable way to overcome these challenges is to ensure that these students will use these resources meaningfully. Once that is established, combating the challenges will be worthwhile. Otherwise, these students will use the Internet for wrong motives, completely different from why subscriptions were made for them or why Internet connectivity was strengthened for them.

Research Question 4: In what ways are Internet resources relevant to the academic performance of secondary school students in Esan West LGA?

Table 6: Relevance of Internet resources to academic performance?

S/N	Relevance	of	Internet	Resources	on	Academic	True	False
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	Performance		
1.	Use of Internet resources have improves my	398 (93.65%)	27 (6.35%)
	performance during test and examination		
2.	Use of Internet resources have helped me to learn self-	189 (44.47%)	236 (55.53%)
	study skills		
3.	Use of Internet resources have helped me to develop	197 (46.35%)	228 (53.65%)
	information seeking skills		
4.	Use of Internet resources have helped me to develop life-	146 (34.35%)	279 (65.65%)
	long learning skills		

Source: Field Data

From Table 6, 398 (93.65%) of the respondents opined that the 'use of Internet resources have improves my performance during test and examination'; 189 (44.47%) of them are of the view that the 'use of Internet resources have helped me to learn self-study skills'; 197 (45.35%) of them said the 'use of Internet resources have helped me to develop information seeking skills'; and 146 (34.35%) of the respondents are of the opinion that the 'use of Internet resources have helped me to develop life-long learning skills'.

The use of Internet resources has improved respondents' performance during test and examination. However, the use of Internet resources has not helped them to learn self-study skills, nor develop information seeking skills, and develop life-long learning skills. Adegoke (2019) found in his study that there is a positive correlation between Internet use and students' achievements in their studies. Interestingly also, the researcher (Adegoke, 2019) found out that most of the students' activities online are not related to academic works. They spend more time watching films, games pornography and socio-networking sites (Xanga, Facebook, Friendstar, MySpace, Twitter, hi5, Google plus 2go instant messaging, chat rooms and emails etc.)

The issue of right orientation for these students cannot be overemphasized. For these students to excel in their academics by use of the Internet, they must learn how to meaningfully use the Internet, balancing study and leisure.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following are the summary of finding for the research:

- 1. Secondary school students have access to Internet connectivity.
- 2. Social Media, Search Engines and Electronic Newspapers are the major Internet resources they use.

- 3. The students access the Internet mainly to keep in touch with friend, get current information, improve their reading habits, and be exposed to global issues.
- 4. The major challenges of accessing Internet resources by students are that Internet access is too expensive, Internet connectivity is slow, and lack of training/guidance on how to use the Internet.
- 5. The use of Internet resources has improved students' performance during test and examination, not in their overall improvement.
- 6. The use of Internet resources has not helped them to learn self-study skills, nor develop information seeking skills, nor develop life-long learning skills.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Internet, no doubt, is useful to students in their academic pursuits. If properly used, the Internet can make any student soar higher in their academics and life generally, because the Internet has a plethora of information. From the research findings, we see that the students have access to the Internet, using more of social media, search engines and electronic newspapers as the Internet resources. However, challenges militating against their access to the Internet are that the internet subscription is expensive, connectivity is slow, and they lack proper training/guidance on how to use the Internet.

The major reasons why the students access the Internet are to keep in touch with friend, get current information, improve their reading habits, and be exposed to global issues; and the most used Internet resources are Social Media, Search Engines and Electronic Newspapers. Also, the use of Internet resources has improved students' performance during test and examination. Nonetheless, the use of Internet resources has not helped them to learn self-study skills, nor develop information seeking skills as well as negate developing life-long learning skills.

From the research findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

- 1. Students should be properly trained and constantly guided on the profitable use of the Internet and its resources for their academic pursuits.
- 2. Mobile telecommunication companies should make Internet subscription and access cheaper, so that students can access the Internet for their academic works.
- 3. Internet connectivity should be strengthened and made faster, so that timely and urgent information can be accessed.

IMPACT OF THE STUDY

Secondary School Students: This study will be beneficial to secondary school students themselves, as the research will expose them to the importance of the Internet to their academic performance. This research will equip secondary school students with knowledge on why they should use the Internet in their academic pursuits so as to get the best out of education; and to be experts in handling the Internet.

Educators: This study will help educators as they themselves will not appreciate the relevance of the Internet in academic performance if they do not have computer literacy skills as well as Internet literacy skills. It will help them to understand the Internet literacy skills necessary to assist secondary school students in their academic pursuits, thereby, being able to teach such Internet literacy skills to their students. Educators will find this research work useful as it will also proffer solutions to their own deficiencies.

Education Policy Makers: This research will help policy makers in the education sector to understand the rudiments of Internet literacy as it pertains to academic performance of students, and the necessary Internet skills that can assist secondary school students. Hence, this research work will help education policy makers to develop curricula that place emphasis on the acquisition of Internet literacy skills, which are prerequisite for proper functioning in this information era.

Lovers of Research and Education: Indeed, this research work will be beneficial to all lovers of research and education who see information for the purpose of being up-to-date. Those who love research but for some reasons, cannot carry out such researches, will find this research helpful quenching their taste and satisfy them in their quest for information and knowledge about the relevance of Internet resources on the academic performance of secondary school students.

General Public: The general public will find this research work useful to them when they seek information concerning the relevance of Internet resources on the academic performance of secondary school students. The general public may need information randomly, at any point in time on the relevance of Internet resources on the academic performance of secondary school students; at such times, this research work will be a handy and useful tool in meeting the information needs of such people.

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