Galvanizing the Infopreneurship Career Development for Office & Information Management Professionals

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Abstract

Infopreneurship is a viable alternative for information managers to exude creative thinking, strategic planning, focused and purposeful marketing strategies to innovative and create employment opportunities in the face of the dwindling economic quagmire. This paper x-rayed the opportunities in inforpreneurship career path for graduate of office and information management. In a bid to achieving this focus, the paper reviewed literatures on the conceptual overview of infopreneurship awareness, career development and infopreneurship career paths for information managers as well as related challenges. The paper identified inadequate awareness; inadequate ICT skills, over dependence on white collar jobs among other as factors that impede infopreneurship to stride in Nigeria; however, the paper recommends pertinent abilities or skills infopreneurs should have to remain in business.

Keywords: infopreneurship, entrepreneurship, information career development, enterprise success

Introduction

Infopreneurship is an enterprising business model footed on creating, gathering, packaging and distribution of target-based information products and services via the limitless possibilities of ICT for the purpose of generating income, understanding that Information is life, power, security, money and business that can be traded (Amanpour 2012). From the above position one can perceive that information is dynamic, expensive and is continually being reconfigured and repackaged to meet individual and organization demands who are willing to pay for this information to inform sound decision, solve problems, increase profitability and have competitive edge. Various categories of information users are willing to pay the price to those who recognize and treat information as marketable commodity. Information management professionals must be prepared to explore these golden opportunities inherent in infopreneurship. Infopreneurship is a profit-motivated business of gathering and providing electronic or online information products and services especially through the internet to those who need such information and are willing to pay.

According to Umoru (2016), the growth and development of any society lies in the ability of its citizenry to identify and exploit an existing but unnoticed investment opportunity in a way that seems new to the expected market. Therefore, harnessing various entrepreneurial opportunities for national development is not just the way forward, but a sure foundation for sustainable development. Information management professionals can harness the many opportunities in information business in a profit oriented manner by acquiring appropriate skills. infopreneurship is a profiteering entrepreneurial venture that seeks and leverage on creating and marketing digital products. Today, many information specialists around the world are compelled to use their new skills and strategies in order to survive and continue to compete in the world of virtual information with the attendant economic return. However, many information management graduates do not seem to be aware of these avalanche opportunities, which is the knowledge gap this paper seeks to cover.

Infopreneurship and Infopreneurs: A Conceptual Overview

According to David and Dube (2014), an infopreneur is an entrepreneur who identifies opportunities for creating enterprising information-based business by identifying knowledge deficiency situations and selling target-based information products and services, mainly through the internet. In a broader perspective, Kango (2015) perceives infopreneur as an entrepreneur whose main media is the World Wide Web (WWW) and main source of profit are information products and service. Kango posits further that given their training and background, infopreneurship to the management professionals twirl beyond the packaging and marketing of information products and services via the internet but it include even traditional information-based services aimed at making profit.

Heidenreich cited in Stanley (2017) avers that generally there are two dimensions of infopreneurs; those who sell information they create (info-creators) and those who earn commission by selling information others create which they gather from different sources. Such infopreneurs are often referred as information traffickers. Heidenreich further stated that information trackers leverage on the world wide web (www) to create blogs and web page which serves as their visual store.

El-Kalash, Mohammed and Aniki (2016) concludes that an infopreneur is anyone who has the vision and passion for generating, packaging and disseminating information to interested clients for a fee, especially using the electronic medium.
Dan was more explicit underpinning that an "infopreneur is a researcher and expert who sells his or her expertise. The ideal feature of good infopreneur is to provide the information his core audience wants to buy" (Khosrowjerdi 2014: 2).
Coulson-Thomas (2000), avers that infopreneurs understand and keep abreast with the developments in information and communication technologies, and information business systems in order to identify and access relevant sources of information, knowledge and understanding, target markets, pricing models and relevant customer network trends.

Infopreneurship and Sustainable National Development

Globally, all nations strive to attain sustainable economic development by establishing roadmap in creating wealth and jobs, encouraging development of new knowledge and technology, and helping to put in place formidable health system, stable and sustainable political landscape. According to Madu, Aboyade and Ajayi (2016), national development is nation's ability to improve the social welfare of the people. They outlined nation's development features to include: education, rich natural resources, rapid industrialization, stable political environment and increase in the working population.

Infopreneurship Awareness Amongst Information Management Professionals

Information management professionals are trained in the theory and practice of information handling. Albeit, with the advent of Information and Communication Technology, the profession has become even more fascinating because ICT has enlarged the frontiers of information services and engendered a global audience with inherent opportunities for job creation and self reliance.

There is increasing acceptance of information and knowledge need amongst individuals and organizations who are investing a great deal on information commodity. Hence, the business of packaging and marketing information products and services for income generation is a hot-bate in information professions. Therefore, Information professionals ought to be fully aware of this booming opportunity and reposition themselves especially as unemployment is becoming a norm in Nigeria. There are many Nigerians whose major channel of livelihood come from the sales of information products and services because they took the courage to do what everyone else has continued to disregard by discovering the basic requirements for making money with information products and service (Emenike, 2016). Infopreneurship has become necessary for graduates in Nigeria not only because it can generate employment, but because it promotes the image and status of information professionals.

Infopreneurship Career Paths for Office and Information Management Professionals

There are ranges of information commodities that can be exploited in the career landscape of office and information management. Such engagement catchment includes online database services, database designing, sale of e-books, web newsletters, offering online conferences through networking services, e-publishing, information brokerage, information consultancy, internet services, selective dissemination of information (SDI), current Awareness Services (CAS), publishing and editing, indexing and abstracting services, online literature search, information repackaging, contract cataloguing; marketing of books to libraries; reprographic services; and electronic publishing. These are many streams of information services that can be utilized by the inforpreneur.

Challenges of infopreneurship in Nigeria.

Infopreneurship like other entrepreneurial activities in Nigeria faces some challenges that hamper its development. Some of them include: High level of illiteracy, poor internet connectivity, inadequate ict skills, high cost of running business, inadequate awareness of business opportunities in the information sector, over dependence on white collar jobs among others.

These enumerated challenges are pointer to the pertinent skill, technical know-how and abilities expected to possessed by the inforpreneur. Accordingly, Igbeka (2008) outlined five elements for successful infopreneurs to include intelligence, strong personality, good general education, skilled in computer knowledge and how to use the net. Richard (2012), maintained excellent organizational skills; good spoken and written communication skill, high level of accuracy and attention to details, logical and methodical approach to work, good research skills, high level of computer literacy, especially with database and internet; the ability to work with people at all levels and from different backgrounds, an awareness of what information users really need, an awareness of data protection and copyright laws, attentiveness, enthusiasm, self-confidence and decision making skills as the required capabilities daring infopreneurs must arm herself with to strive.

Conclusion

This theoretical exercise began with the focus to establish infopreneurial career path for office and information managers. In a bid to reaching this goal the study gave a conceptual clarity of infopreneurship, also underpinning its contribution to national development. Eventually the study enumerate several career path of infopreneurship the office and information manager can leverage on. The paper also identified likely setbacks of infopreneurial business in Nigeria which precincts on both system issues and personal factors. Eventually as way forward the study recommends required skills by everyone who dare to be an inforpreneur.

Acknowledgement

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