

# **“Librarian’s Awareness about Social Media and its use in Libraries in Digital Environment”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Libraries are considered as treasures of knowledge. It is also known as storehouse of knowledge. It is true that all libraries in the world are full of reading material which consist books, journals, films, images, manuscripts, Audio visual materials etc. Now a day with the help of Digital Technology many Libraries and Information Centers maintain their own websites on which all kind of information such as, Library collection, infrastructure facility, and functions of library, services, and library timings etc., details will be available. The popularity of social media made it as a fastest communication tool for dissemination of information and influenced by all sorts of people, so as like others Librarians are also influenced by social media. This article enumerates the librarian’s awareness of social media and its uses in their college libraries in this Digital Environment.*

**KEYWORDS: Social Media Concept, Social Media its usage in Library, Librarians Social Media Awareness.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social Media is Web based Technology to facilitate social interaction between large groups of people through some type of network. Social media is growing rapidly and becoming a vital part of everyday life, because of the latest technological revolution. The digital era has expanded the responsibilities of Librarians to provide a wide range of resources and services to users that extend beyond the physical walls of the Library. The roles of librarians in the global information environment are unique and are critical to information availability and distribution both in the physical and virtual fields (Igun, 2010). Librarians, in this digital age, are responsible for a wide variety of resources and services that expand far beyond the typical eight-hour work day. Notably, the advent of other sources of information like the internet, World Wide Web and even social media that has led to a new challenge for librarians to meet the rapidly changing information needs and expectations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century users. Librarians now have a

challenge of making themselves more relevant in this digital age. The challenge of most librarians is to attract users to the library and to retain them. To deal with this challenge, librarians are reconsolidating, reshaping, re-designing and repackaging resources as a means of promoting their services and information.

A library is a building that has a collection especially of books, for people to read or borrow, usually without payment ("Library," 2008). Modern Technology and discoveries such as smart phones, mobile internet facilities and social media platforms have created new challenges for librarians to meet these digital era users' information needs and expectation

## **CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social Media has been defined in several ways. Oxford Dictionary (2013) defines Social Media as "websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in Social Networking". According to Bradley (2012) the term Social Media refers to "the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue". Kaplan & Haenlein (2010: 61) have described Social Media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". Brian Solis, one of the most published authors in new Media, defines Social Media as "the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers" (Solis, 2010). Based on the above definitions Social Media can be described as a group of web-based and mobile applications that allow users to share and create knowledge in a real time social interaction. It is user-centric, multi-purpose and it is not time and location bound. Social Media consists of various channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Blog, YouTube, Flickr.

Social Networking Site is efficient for communication. Through SNSs, the library target individuals, conversations that happen between librarians and users or among users. Research finds that low self-disclosure on SNS make it easier for users to launch conversations with acquaintances. Besides, due to the concise format and informal tones, SNS is more likely to stir up interactions between users than the other non-social networking Web 2.0 technologies, such as blogs and wikis.

## **LIBRARIAN'S AWARENESS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA**

Librarians and libraries can optimize for their work and services as well as maintain their relevance is through a medium like social media. In this 21<sup>st</sup> Century, where a paradigm shift in communicating library services to users is evident, a modern and contemporary tool would be needed to promote library and information resources services. Social media are one modern and contemporary new media for effective promotion of library and information services in the technological era. Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and network. The office of communications and marketing manages the main Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and Vimeo accounts.

Librarians desiring to connect constantly with their clients with an eye to increasing users' satisfaction through promotion must make a social presence using social media like Facebook, MySpace, Micro blogging sites like Twitter, Blog, etc. Today, university libraries have created pages on Facebook, like Kenneth Dike Library, Delta State University Library, etc. Libraries, according to Ezeani (2011), should make social networking sites on the internet widely known to patrons and encourage library patrons to use them so as to promote library and information resources and services. It becomes imperative for these university libraries to promote the library effectively which would in turn help in the development of the university as a whole.

Librarians have highlighted several uses of Facebook for academic library outreach. One of the primary uses of Facebook by academic libraries is to market the library with a library fan page. Libraries advertise hours, location, and Web site information. By linking to the library's Web site, the Facebook page acts as a portal to the library. As students frequently use outside search engines for academic research, even a basic Facebook page can serve as a reminder to use the resources available at an academic library. Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities. Essentially, Facebook pages provide a marketing tool for the services available to students at their academic library.

1. Announce programmes of the Library.
2. Use to promote library services.
3. Used to advertise library events and create online library study groups and book clubs for students
4. Give students and staff the opportunity to ask questions pertaining to the use of the library.
5. Teach basic library search tools.
6. Information on new books can be provided on the wall of SNSs to inform the general users.
7. Send brief updates to patrons
8. To carry out library services anytime and anywhere e.g. - ask a Librarian
9. Use as teaching tools either by the libraries or library schools.
10. Library can use the social media as a platform for user education or library orientation programme, etc.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE IN LIBRARY ACTIVITIES**

Social Media is a product of web-based or Digital Technologies and they depend on these online and Mobile Technologies to operate. The different types of social media are Facebook, blogs, microblogging, YouTube, Twitter, Wikis, Mash Up, Digg, Delicious Second Life, Flickr, Picasa, amongst others.

One of the primary uses of Facebook by academic libraries is to promote the library with a library homepage. Libraries advertise hours, locations, website information, newly acquired materials, etc. on Facebook. Facebook can provide updates on library services such as new reference services, document delivery, research supports etc. Some libraries can also put up post related to library collections such as updates or promotions of electronic and print collections, database trials and other research resources. Libraries also create event invitations for programs as an additional forum to promote library activities.

A blog can be defined as a user generated website where entries are much in journal style and displayed in a reverse chronological order. Blog is the social media-equivalent of personal Webpages and can come in a multitude of different variations from personal diaries describing the author's life to summaries of all relevant information in one specific content area. A blog can be used for promoting library and information resources and services. It can be used in a library for outreach, dissemination of information, building library image, internal and external communication, highlight new and valuable recently added materials and most importantly for promoting. Librarians can periodically post messages, share information on a particular subject or issues both in the institutions and government and allow users to comment or contribute to the content., articles on thought provoking issues can be posted and expect instant reaction. They can also be used for supporting the activities of the parent communities of libraries such as community news about festivities, ceremonies, sports, etc. and librarians can post news about the library as well as events occurring in the library.

## **BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

Social Media have become a dependable platform for the dissemination of information, forum for feedback mechanism, for research and of course for promotion. It is therefore not surprising that libraries all over the world have not failed to embrace social media for promoting their services. The social media like Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram, Blog, Flickr, YouTube, Wiki, etc. are useful for the promotion of library resources and services to library patrons.

The social media platforms create a good forum for feedbacks from Library users and Librarians can positively influence their users when they get responses from them as to what is affecting them and library usage. Villoldo (2012) stated that communication with the library user by Librarians is the service that Library has most benefited from Social Media platform implementation. Social media for promoting library and information services saves time and library staff hours. Social media have helped libraries in providing quick updates to users and provide a forum for quick and speedy response from library patrons. More so, Social Media make it easier to reach a large number of library patrons in the most time effective manner.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Higher Education plays a significant role and is one of the key drivers for the growth, performance and competitiveness of an individual at national and international level, due to the rapid growth of the Digital Technology the higher education system is going through significant changes. Social media presence of libraries attracts more users to the library. In this Digital Environment official social media pages of libraries have become a requisite factor to attract users to library. Librarians in India have to develop official pages in flicker, Picasa for image sharing and utilize video sharing tools of Youtube, Viddler, Vimeo, Ustream etc. Even though multipurpose Social Media sites like Facebook, Google plus, LinkedIn etc. and blogs only poses limited image and video tool application it is most preferred by Librarians in India for sharing their personal and library images and videos. Library websites can also be integrated with social media and vice versa.

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