



## Applications of Social Networking Sites in Marketing & Promotion of Library Services

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### ABSTRACT

The impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has changed the scenario of libraries and has given a new dimension to Library and Information Science (LIS) centers. In this digital era, due to continue progress of ICT applications, the concept of web 2.0 has come into existence as an add on invention to the web 1.0. Web 2.0 includes social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, web applications etc. This paper is an attempt to describe the possible usefulness and applications of social networking technologies and social software in web 2.0 in the field of library and information services. Social networking sites are one of the new web technologies, which have affected the operations and service delivery of libraries. Social networking sites allow the libraries to advertise their programs and activities. The aim of this paper to express possible applications of social networking sites in marketing and promotion of library services.

### KEYWORDS

Web 2.0, Social Networking Sites, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn

### INTRODUCTION :-

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play an important role in enhancing efficiency in development of library services. ICT is changing the work of libraries and information centers.

Information Technology (IT) is the result of continue progress made by the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications. IT is involving with new areas across academia, industrial sector, business, entertainment etc. We are living in a digital world, which is changing with the changed scenario of IT tools and applications. Now, with the impact of IT applications in every sector of our society, we can say that we are highly dependent on information technology.

The impact of IT, Internet and related web technologies on the delivery of library services is evident in the first decade of this century. The conceptual shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 and It affects modern libraries and information centres. The concept of web 2.0 is a the new add on inventions to the web 1.0. Web 2.0 uses many of the same technologies as Web 1.0. Web 1.0 could be considered as 'read only web', while web 2.0 sites allow users to do more than only retrieve information (find information) and gives freedom to its all users to contribute to the content. It facilitates users to communicate, interact and collaborate with the web. Web 2.0 is the '*Participatory Web*' which allows users to generate their content to be published on web pages. It allows information flows two ways between site owner and site user by means of evaluation, review, and commenting. Web 2.0 tools and its applications in web based library and information services are more relevant here. Web 2.0 includes social networking sites, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, web applications etc. which are very popular these days. The present and the future of libraries lies in making them a platform for conversation, collaboration and sharing.

### SOCIAL NETWORKING :-

The concept of social networking is one of the tools of Web 2.0. The term social networking can be referred to as a web platform where people from different cultural settings can connect and interact with each other.

The basic aim of "Social Networking" is same as resource sharing. Social networking is web-based services that allow individuals to create a public profile, to create a list of users with whom to share connection, and view and cross the connections within the system. Most social network services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the

Internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Social network sites are varied and they incorporate new information and communication tools such as, mobile connectivity, photo/video sharing and blogging.

These websites are free and allow users to easily create personal pages filled with content in the form of images, music, and videos. Social networking websites allow users to share interests and communicate with others. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, pictures, posts, activities, events, and interests with people in their network.

Social networking is the practice of expanding the number of one's business and social contacts by making connections through individuals. While social networking has gone on almost as long as societies themselves have existed, the unparalleled potential of the Internet to promote such connections is only now being fully recognized and exploited, through web-based groups established for that purpose (whatls.com).

The wide application of social networking in different contexts appears to have included universities and libraries as well (Boyd and Ellison 2007).

Social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd, 2007).

As defined by **Wikipedia**, A social network is structure made up of individuals or organizations called "nodes" , which are tied or connected by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kingship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of belief, knowledge or prestige.

According to **Computing Dictionary (2011)**, Social networking site as any website designed to allow multiple users to publish content of themselves. The information may be on anysubject andmay be for consumption by friends, mates, employers, employees just to mention a few.

**Boyd and Ellison (2007)** define social networking sites as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, to view and navigate their list of connections and those made by

others within the system.

**Powell (2009)** defines *social networking as a community in which individuals are somehow connected through friendship, values, working relationships, idea and so on.*

**Seufert et al (1999)** defines *social networking in terms of knowledge networking as signifying a number of people, resources and relationships among them, who are assembled in order to accumulate and use knowledge primarily by means of knowledge creation and transfer processes, for the purpose of creating value. Deducing from the above definitions.*

#### USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY LIBRARIES :-

Today, Social Networking is involved in every field like business, education, entertainment etc. Social Networking is the big buzzword and is a big part of Internet culture and Internet Marketing. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are very useful for educational & research purposes, communication, business networking, marketing, entertainment and generating services by using other social software tools like RSS, Wikis etc.

Libraries and other business organizations are using social networking sites as a online platform to interact and reach out to their patrons or clients. It has also become a platform for students to interact on issues related to their course work. Students also use this platform to share information amongst themselves on any subject and topic.

#### Social Networking Sites (SNSs) are mostly used by libraries to :

1. Announce programmes of the library
2. Give students the opportunity to ask questions related to the use of the library
3. Teach basic search tools
4. Paste new books on the wall of SNS to inform the Library Community or Library users
5. Send brief updates to patrons

In digital world, academic libraries can efficiently respond to the needs of their modern users or patrons by applying technologies like social networking, web applications, and online check in/outs to their service delivery.

#### SOCIAL NETWORKING IN MARKETING & PROMOTION OF LIBRARY SERVICES :-

The growing importance of ICT, Internet, WWW, Social networking has given a new dimension to Library & Information Science (LIS) centers. The involvement of social networking has lead a revolutionary change in the functioning of libraries. Social Networks can be used for providing user centric service in social library environment. Social networking sites in a context of libraries are known as Library 2.0.

Social Networking provides an online platform to libraries to market and promote their library services, products and resources. Libraries can introduce discussion forums, public profiles, blogs, virtual library tour. Libraries can use SNS to advertise hours, library timings, borrowing information, fine/loan details, location, website information, to inform about Library's activity, work, services, events, its new projects, new arrival, current content services of library, new resources available, to share videos on the library's workshops, exhibitions, conferences, library collections, to communicate and interact with users and to publicizing books, exhibitions, displays, fairs, competitions, talks, author visits and other programmes. In this way, Social Networking Sites (SNSs) act as a marketing and promotional tool for libraries.

The most common Social Networking websites are Facebook, Blog, Twitter, LinkedIn, My Space, Orkut etc.

**Facebook** :- Facebook is an online social networking service. Facebook is a very versatile social network that allows sharing videos, links, image galleries, invitations to an event etc. Users may leave comments, state that they like some content, or

share content in their own pages.

Social networking site, facebook is librarian friendly. Facebook can be used to get library news and events out in the world. Academic libraries can use facebook to market the library with a library fan page. Libraries can use facebook to share the information about their new arrivals and editions of books. With the help of facebook, libraries can advertise their different upcoming events. Libraries can advertise hours, location and website information. Libraries can give information about the Library's activity, work, services, events, its new projects, latest developments in the field of library and information science. By linking the library's website, the facebook page acts as a portal to the library. Group communication among patrons can be possible in web 2.0.

**Twitter** :- Twitter is a free and very dynamic social networking site that allows users to write short messages of up to 140 characters, called tweets, that can be read by anyone with access to their page. Twitter allows registered users to post brief messages for other users who follow the account and to comment on the other posts. Libraries can use Twitter for communication with their users. Twitter and can be used by the libraries to market library reference/research services. Twitter is a "Microblogging Application". Libraries use Twitter, a microblogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections, new arrival, current content services of library. Microblogging is newer option made popular by twitter. Twitter allow librarians to go where the students are already located. Libraries can post hour changes, events, new resources available, search tips, links to the library websites & responses to student comments.

**MySpace** :- MySpace is very popular social networking site which allow users to make friends, talk online and share resources. MySpace allows users to decorate their profiles using HTML and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). By using myspace, libraries can communicate with the students or patrons or library community. The librarians use MySpace as an outreach tool.

**Blogs** :- According to **Wikipedia**, "A **blog** is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog."

Blogs are a powerful tool. By creating a blog, you will be able to disseminate information to lots of people at one time. Libraries can use Blogs to keep current with developments in the field of librarianship. Libraries can use Blogs as a tools for promoting distance learning. Libraries can use Blogs to keep their users current with developments in the field of librarianship.

The library blog can be used as a medium to inform the users about the resources and services, such as new arrivals, library timings, borrowing information, fine and loan details, etc. It can be used to publicizing books, exhibitions, displays, fairs, competitions, talks, author visits and other programmes on the library blog.

**LinkedIn** :- LinkedIn is a Professional Networking site. LinkedIn can be used by the libraries to create professional connections and to market library services among other professionals working in different libraries of the world and can also solicit their ideas and professional experiences. This social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information. Whether that's you, faculty, authors, historians, or other sources, they can find them in your LinkedIn network.

#### Some Other Social Software Tools :-

Marketing and promotion of library services can be possible by using social software and video sharing tools like Wikis, RSS, Flickr, YouTube, Slideshare etc.

**YouTube :-** YouTube can be used for storing and sharing videos on the library's activities, events held like exhibitions, conferences, workshops, library collections. Libraries can also market their different programs conferences workshops by uploading their videos on the YouTube. Digital video library can be framed by using the most successful tool like YouTube in Library. Library video and e-learning tutorials, events and others video library services can be effectively promote and webcast through YouTube.

**Wikis :-** Libraries can use Wikis for collaboration and sharing of work. Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia updated by users. Libraries can use this tool to share knowledge by editing, or simply point library patrons in the right direction. Libraries can also host their library websites on wiki software like PB-Wiki.

**PBwiki :-** PBwiki is the world's largest provider of hosted business and educational wikis. It encourages collaboration from students, a way to showcase work, and offers a central gathering point for information. PBwiki offers controlled access, so you can give some editing privileges, while others can only read.

**RSS :-** Libraries can use RSS as a tools for promoting distance learning. RSS and Blogs can be used to market library services among distance learner. With the help of RSS, libraries can republish and syndicate the contents on the Web.

**Slideshare :-** It facilitate faculty, staff and students to share their slideshow presentations for the greater community to access on SlideShare. It is a great way to disseminate information among research community to the field of research and development activities.

**Flickr :-** Libraries can use Flickr to upload library images. They can also share and upload the pictures of different library events and services by using Flickr. Library can share photo collection of workshops, conferences and other organized programmes. You can create image sets with metadata, as well as take advantage of the many plugins available for Flickr users. Flickr users can also help gather missing information about images.

**BENEFITS OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES TO LIBRARIES :-** Social networking is integral to market library. SNS capture potential users of the library. Social networking sites help students to use library. It helps libraries in building collaborative network with the users. Social networking helps to feed user with information. Social networking sites have its own advantages to Libraries, Librarians and their patrons or users or clients. Some of the benefits are as follows:

1. Social networking sites facilitate collaborations and promote effective communication between Librarians and their patrons.
2. It allows libraries to create, connect, converse, to contribute and share information.
3. Social networking site facilitates knowledge sharing.
4. It will generate a flow of information excluded from search engines and Library Catalogues.
5. It helps libraries to get closer to the users.
6. It is great way to grab the attention of new users.
7. The crucial aim of librarians is to make library resources available to patrons so if social networking sites will help to achieve this goal.
8. Social networking sites help students in locating library resources.
9. Social networking sites wall linked to a library's web page has the potential of reaping great results by attracting and serving Distance Education Students.
10. It helps in promoting distance learning.
11. Social networking sites will lead present and future delivery of information to meet search queries of modern users.
12. It will help Librarians and Libraries to keep up-to-date with technologies and compete effectively with the digital World.

In short, social networking sites can be beneficial to librarians

and their patrons. Libraries can use social networking sites to deliver effective services to users with limited resources. Libraries to promote collaborations and connections between librarians and their clients or patrons. The use of this tool does not require any special equipment apart from computer, Internet connectivity and a trained professional to manage.

## CONCLUSION :-

With the impact of technological changes and according to the changing needs of library users, libraries need to be changed accordingly. The use of social networking for marketing & promotion of library resources and services is the need of time. By using social networking sites, libraries can promote their services, resources and events. Libraries should create their web sites and social webpages on social networking sites. People are highly active on the social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, linkedin, blogs, myspace, academia, etc. So that, libraries can use these sites as a platform to reach the maximum users of society and to announce various services, new resources available, and various announcements like workshops, seminar, exhibitions etc. Librarians should be trained and educated regarding the use of social networking for marketing & promotion of library resources and services.

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