



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Social science

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES

KEY WORDS: Social Media, Websites, Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Social connections have become very important and improved the library profession tremendously in India. Social media emerged in India principally for the purpose of socializing. Undoubtedly, as a growing economy the use of these media often meet the challenges for the exahusement of library services through these media have been preferred. Also discuss most popular categories of social media and analysis the ways in which social media can be used productivity in libraries.

INTRODUCTION

Technology and its continuous advancements are making life better. The communication is now too easily to manage and Exchange ideas in quick successions. Libraries should play important roles in education patrons about the new technologies and the social networking skills. We can educate our users on new skill and competencies needed to flourish in the new environment.

Social Media has a huge impact on changes in the way we communicate and exchange information. It has opened hundred of new doors to be in touch with others and establish an online presence.

1. What is Social Media:

The best way to define social media is to break it down. Media is an instrument on communication, like a newspaper or a radio, so social media would be a social instrument of communication.

“Social media are primarily internet based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings.” Wikipedia

2. Social media: Characteristics

Kietzmann et al. (2011) pictures social media as a honeycomb with seven functional building blocks are:

- (i) Identity: The extent to which users reveal about themselves.
- (ii) Conversations: To which users communicate with each other.
- (iii) Sharing: To which users exchange, distribute and receive content.
- (iv) Presence; To which users know if others are available.
- (v) Relationships: To which users relate to each other.
- (vi) Reputation; To which users know the social standing of others and content.
- (vii) Groups: To which users are ordered or form communities.

These building blocks help explain the engagement needs of the social media audience.

Social Media in Libraries:

All libraries, irrespective of whether they are public, academic or special or community libraries serving a specific community. Digital revolution along with the internet made is possible for users to access the resources they need without really visiting the library, forcing libraries to think of alternate ways to reach and remind the patrons about their presence.

Frequency of use:

In a study from the mid 2000's most libraries directors in the US when they questions about social media said that they did not think that libraries had a role in social networking.

But now a days social media becomes mainstream, as a recent study July 2014, over 70% of librarian now found to be using social media.

Objectives: Top 3 objectives are:

- (i) promote events.
- (ii) promote library resources/collections.

- (iii) promote library services.

Social Media Websites

Answered the questions of what is social media, we can move on to social media websites. Because social media is such a broad term, it covers a large no. of websites. But the one common link between these websites is that you are able to internet with the websites and interact with other visitors.

Examples of Social Media Websites:**Social Bookmaking:**

(Del.ici.us, Blinklist, Simpy) interest by tagging websites and searching through websites bookmarked by other people.

Social News:

(Digg, Propelles, Reddit) interact by voting for articles and community on them.

Social Networking:

(Facebook, Hi5, Last.FM) adding friends, community on profiles, joining groups and having discussions.

Social Photos or Video Sharing:

(Youtube, Flickr) by sharing photos or videos and community on user submissions.

Wikis

(Wikipedia, Wikia) by adding articles and editing existing articles. The major aim and motto of any libraries presence on social media is “being there where our patrons are”.

Now a day's, users have no time to come and spend hours in the library. Social Media emerges as a remedy for this. It is observed that librarians are using social media potentially for:

- Outreach purpose
- Promotion and marketing of library services.
- Making announcements.
- Reference Services.
- Creating discussion threads.
- Networking with other libraries.

Other Uses:

- Reference Transactions.
- Receiving/resolving complaints.
- Technical Instructions.
- Collaborate with other college deptt.

Introduce how and showcase existing resources, reminders of special resources available to the academic community

- Have conversation with users and learn more about
- Sharing reading suggestions.
- Promoting hidden collections.
- Recruiting and managing volunteers.
- Show items relating to local history via contest and providing links to helpful resources.

- Promoting Universities archives.
- Announces new releases, hot picks on the shelf, day's activities in library, answers questions.
- Circulation notifications by text messaging.

How works Social Media in Library:

Many libraries are now a day's connecting with their users through different social media tools. While some are utilizing the potential of blogs, some other are experimenting with social networking sites such as Facebook or Myspace. While some are creating Wiki pages blog for users, some others are sharing photos and videos through context committees. A few are using a combination of two or more of these tools to serve their customers. Below are the some examples of some libraries using some of the social media tools.

Facebook:

Most popular now because it is librarian friendly with many applications like JSTOR search, Worldcat and much more. Librarians can interact with users to know their information need. Libraries try to link some of these specialized library applications to facebook. Some of the libraries that are very active on social network sites are:

British Library, National library of Wales

Myspace:

In academic institutions where the students are libraries have taken advantage of this site of post, calendar, custom catalogue search tools and blog features to improve their presence.

Blogs:

Are websites which resembles personal webpages allowing entries to reverse chronological order with a date stamp on it. They are commonly used as online personal diaries. Blogs are usually managed by one person only, but provide the possibilities of interaction with other though the addition of comments. Some of the most commonly used blogging services are blogger and word press. A few examples are:

Library of Congress, Kendriya Vidyalaya Library, Kerala
In library librarians can periodically post messages, share information on a particular subject or users and allow user to contribute to content. They can write articles, news on topical issues and expect an instant reaction from their users.

Wikis:

Is a free online encyclopedia that gives a background knowledge and definition of concepts. It's useful for collaborative and team works. It can be either private or open depending on the decision of the creator. Most popular wiki is Wikipedia, has over 30 millions articles and 2000000 active contributors. Few others are Wikihow, Wikidot, Wikimedia, etc.

LinkedIn:

Librarians can get patrons connected with specialists in their particular field of interact via LinkedIn. Librarians can use this platform to render specialized services such as Strategic Dissemination of Information (SDI)

Twitter:

A micro blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections. Users can utilize this platform to type in short messages or status update. Librarians can use this platform to give users firsthand information on the ongoing national elections. Users can send instant message (IM) on complaints or ask questions on a particular issue and get a feedback on the spot using twitter

YouTube:

In institution in India, events such as important highlights of inaugural lectures, conferences and workshops are disseminated via the you tube.

Flicker:

Libraries can use this tool to share and distribute new images of

library collections. Cover page of new arrivals of books and journals can be disseminated to users via flicker.

Library Thing:

A tool that enriches the library, OPAC. Once an account is created, a list of books with ISBN is sent to library thing which sends back a piece of code which is pasted into the footer of the library OPAC.

How to promote Social networking sites in Library:

Using Elations on websites, email signatures, printed matter displayed in library, screens displayed in the library, widgets, library ambassadors, due date slip in the library.

Utilizing the library websites through (e-buttons) is by for the most frequently used method for promoting awareness of library social media activities followed by e-mail signature. This likely is a result of the limited budget a library has available for resources, such as printed materials but may also reflect that the website and e-mail signatures also more likely to be seen by sizeable audience. For those with budget for print material, typical promotions include postcards advertising the libraries face book page or twitter handles.

Challenges:

Librarians can and should educate patrons on the use of these social networking tools to adopt to new ways of accessing, communicating and sharing knowledge. Brilliant use of the social cyberspace promotes open access to knowledge.

Challenges are:

Lack of Awareness:

Most librarian's in the developing countries are not aware of social networking services, even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive users of these sites for library services. Users are also not aware about the protocols involved in social communications. Students and academic staff also unaware that there is a subject specialist in their discipline.

Bandwidth Problem:

Most institution have limited bandwidth to support this practices. Poor connectivity can frustrate effective online participation.

Technophobia:

Many librarians and users are afraid of handling computers, they make the traditional library services their comfort zone and are not eager to embrace change.

Lack of maintenance culture:

Maintenance culture is seriously lacking in most institutions in developing countries. The few available technologies are in moribund conditions that may not support remote access to information.

Unreliable power supply:

The low supply of electricity discourages people from participating in the online forum.

Lack of training of staff:

Most librarians lack the 21st century skills that could be required to adopt the social networking tools for effective library services.

Copyright users:

The free access to information where people copy, paste and edit without acknowledging the authority is a serious challenge to copyright management.

Advantages:

- Social media helps students to use library.
- It helps libraries to get closer to the users.
- It helps libraries in building collaborative network with users.
- It is great way to grab the users.
- Social media facilitate knowledge sharing.
- Social media helps to feed user with information.
- Social media helps in promoting distance learning.
- Integral part to world library.

Disadvantages:

- Lack of privacy and identity theft.
- Confidentiality of information.
- Lack of time to use social media.
- Electricity failure.
- Slow speed of internet.
- Inadequate fund.
- Lack of knowledge how to use it.
- Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media.

Conclusion:

Social media is used by libraries to deliver a blend of customer services, news and updates, content/collection, promotion, dissemination of the institution, research output, and provision of educational tools and resources and for building relationships both within and outside of the institution.

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