

IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS ON ENHANCING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores how social media can enhance and influence library and information products and their different services. The objectives of the study are, to identify various social media tools used in library services, to abreast enhancement of library services through social media tools and to know the different perspectives of social media influence on libraries in the digital environment. The researchers investigated the previous literature on library services through social media through a comprehensive search in databases. Based on that, the authors discuss various aspects of different library services where social media have an impact. This study will be helpful for all the Library and information professionals who want to incorporate social media into their library and information services.

Keywords: *Social Media, Social Media Tools, Web Tools, Social Networking, Social Networking Sites, Social Media Networks, Social Media Platforms, Library, Marketing, Digital, Digital Marketing, Web 2.0, Library Services, Librarians, Information Services, Library and Information Services,*

1. Introduction

The Library is an organization that works as a lifeline for all an academic institution's research and development activities. A library is a trinity of 'documents', 'users', and 'staff'. In this digital age of the internet and ICTs, library documents and users have become dynamic with the advent of mobile devices and electronic records. Library staff should also become dynamic by providing ICTs penetrated services to the users. "Social media has the strength and ability to be one of the most powerful communication tools for academic libraries in this digital age" (Mensah and Onyanacha, 2021). Social media refers to "the group of internet-based applications that exist on the Web 2.0 platform and that enable internet users from all over the world to

interact, communicate, and share ideas, thoughts, experiences, information, and relationships" (Leung et al. 2013). Social media has many features that can impact traditional library services and transform them into user-centric services. "Social media platforms are among the recent technologies that are central in library's outreach and marketing efforts hence, provide the opportunities for the libraries to improve their service delivery" (Mensah and Onyanacha 2022). "As social media become advanced, it may be a key component in many library services such as marketing, real-time communication, interaction with the patron community, information dissemination, and interactive dialogue through mobile devices"(AlAwadhi and Al-Daihani 2019). This paper will explore the importance of social media and the

opportunities that will impact the implementation of social media by libraries in providing multiple library services to users.

2. Review of Literature

Soorya et al. (2022) analyses the interactivity of the academic library portals in India and found that Facebook followed by Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn are the most preferred interactivity platforms. Social media can replace the traditional marketing tools of the libraries and be used as a general marketing tool for libraries in promoting resources and services if implemented through proper strategy and policies (Ofori et al., 2020).

Mensah and Onyanacha, (2022) through UTAUT technique found that the performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and facilitating conditions have the significant influence on the intention to use and subsequent use of social media in academic libraries in Ghana. Stephens (2022) reveals that Nicholls State University Library use TikTok for posting promotional videos of the library resources and services. Social media tools have the potential to help the researcher in finding better information which led the librarian to integrate social media tools with library websites (de Sarkar 2021). Muhammad and Zhiwei (2021) investigated the various benefits, purpose, issues, and challenges of using social media in libraries. Many library staffs have accepted that a well-formulated, structured and analyzed strategy is a prerequisite for the implementation of social media in marketing library resources and services (Mensah and Onyanacha, 2021). Chaputula et al. (2020) describe the successful use of WhatsApp in providing reference services to the students and staff at Mzuzu University Library in Malawi.

To make library services user-centric, libraries have to incorporate Web 2.0

technologies in their operations. Covid 19 profoundly impacts our lives as it directly affects the economy, health, education, administration, etc. Libraries are also no exception from being affected by the pandemic. And social media help libraries interact with patrons and respond to their needs.. Gmiterek (2021) in his study found that Facebook followed by Instagram and Twitter were the most frequently used social media tools by Polish University Libraries during lockdown. Social media is a very effective way of marketing of library resources and services because of many factors like its usefulness in awareness making, analyzing the needs and the level of satisfaction of the library users (Alawadhi and Al-Daihani, 2019).The non-adoption of social media also influences the individual's morale. Like Williams et al. (2019) indicated in their study that non-adoption of social media negatively impacts the employee's morale. Ansari & Tripathi (2017) reveals that "WhatsApp as mobile instant messaging (MIM) has many advantages for delivering services by the libraries". They also indicated that users have a positive attitude towards WhatsApp for delivering services. Chizwina et al. (2017) "highlighted the use of Facebook and Twitter by North Western University (NWU) Library to inform, educate and communicate with library users during the student's protest #FeeMust Fall Campaign".

3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of the study are:

- a) To identify various social media tools used in different library services.
- b) To abreast enhancement of library services through social media tools.
- c) To know the different perspectives of social media influence on libraries in the digital environment.

4. Methodology

This study reviewed the previous literature and analyzed its contents as evidence to support various arguments in the study. The study uses the observation method to explore the previous literature on the topic in the different databases. Most of the literature were retrieved through databases such as ProQuest (LISA), Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. Other information sources also searched. The study area has been divided into different facets and articles collected from the databases using various combinations of search terms.

5. Importance of Social Media

In this digital age, social media has great importance in every aspect. It has significance for an individual, an organization, or a country. Social media is a Web 2.0 application that provides two-way communication for individuals. Libraries as non-profit organizations also want such media through which they can engage with many users simultaneously. Some of the notable features of Social media are:

- It provides global visibility of an individual or organization.
- It enables individuals to share content.
- It facilitates individuals to interact, engage and communicate at remote locations.
- It allows people to discuss social topics and share their views and thoughts with a large audience.
- It enables organizations to connect with the mass audience and interact with them simultaneously.
- It makes people aware of their surroundings.

The impact of ICT has changed the way of communication of 21st century people. Hence, social media is gaining popularity. "The ICT also impacts libraries as the concept of library gets changed. Libraries are no longer the storehouse of documents and other materials. The present libraries cover all the digital collections like e-journals, e-books, databases, CDs and DVDs, etc. Online services and databases are the buzzword of the day for the users and library using the latest tools & technology" (Parabhoi and Pathy, 2017).

6. Social Media Tools

In this age of internet and information society, several media and communication tools exist. These tools are beneficial in connecting people at remote locations and allow mass people to share their views, thoughts, ideas, and feelings simultaneously. These are social media tools (Muhammad and Zhiwei 2021). "Social media refers to allowing any user to publish content online. Unlike traditional media such as television and print technology, it consists of web-based and mobile technologies, including blogs, music/image/video sharing, internet posting, instant messaging, crowdsourcing, and voice over internet protocol" (Titangos, 2013).

According to Titangos, (2013) there are four main types of social media:

- (i) Writing one's blogs or commenting on other people's blogs (blogging, WordPress, Blogger, Tumblr, Weebly, etc.)
- (ii) Publishing images or audio/video (Flickr, YouTube, etc.)
- (iii) Posting on Social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.), and
- (iv) Collaborating on shared online collective projects (Wikipedia).

Social media is an application of Web 2.0, coined by Tim O'Reilly in 2005. O'Reilly (2005) lists some main characteristics of Web 2.0 as “radical decentralization, radical trust, participation instead of publishing, users as contributors, rich user experience, the long tail, the Web as a platform, control of one’s data, remixing data, collective intelligence, attitudes, better software by more users, play, undetermined user behaviour”. Hence, social media and other Web 2.0 technologies help in “collective intelligence, user participation, data remixing, etc., can create a community of connected users. This community of related users can be beneficial for libraries to disseminate services and resources” (Fuchs, 2017).

7. Enhancement of Library Services Through Social Media

Social Media is a tool that helps individuals interact, engage, communicate and share information over a network. Hence, it can be an effective tool for libraries that must interact, engage, communicate with their users and disseminate information to many users. “In this electronic age, social media and libraries are the two main pillars to maintain learning centres” (Chakrabarti, 2016). Social media can be used in libraries for ‘reference services’, ‘alerting services’, ‘marketing’, ‘outreach programs, etc. With social media, libraries can make themselves user-centric and satisfy users’ needs across the boundary. Joshi and Kamat (2018) describe three purposes of social media in libraries: promote events regarding the library, provide library resources and collection, and provide library services. The author provides a table describing the different social media tools. According to Chakrabarti (2016), the following are the services in which libraries can implement social media as “(i) Information sharing (ii) A/V materials, Circulations (iii) Communications (iv) User services (v) Public

relation (vi) Reference service (vii) User education (viii) Cataloguing service for staff (ix) Service for staff (x) Library notices (xi) Staff Communication (xii) Connection with other Librarians (xiii) Online help service (xiv) Information service (xv) Video sharing (xvi) Library marketing (xvii) News dissemination (xviii) Latest arrivals (xix) Student interaction (xx) Online reference service”.

7.1. Information Sharing

Libraries have information for all disciplines and all categories of users. The exemplary user must get the correct information at the right time from the Library. Hence sharing of information is a core purpose of any library. Users can interact with librarians for textual and Media information regarding library products and services (Muhammad and Zhiwei, 2021). “YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook are the relevant social media platforms for academic libraries in sharing information. It can be used for lectures through forums and groups and also useful in getting feedback from patrons (Bokoh et al. 2022).

7.2. Communication

There are many times when library users need to interact with library staff for textual and Media information, and social media can be an effective tool for this communication (Muhammad and Zhiwei, 2021). Chaputula et al. (2020) revealed in their study the usage of WhatsApp in providing numbers of users and reference services at Mzuzu university library. Through the social networking site Facebook and the instant messaging application WhatsApp, librarians can discuss with users their needs and the books and other resources they want in the library. It will help librarians in acquisition services. Ashiq et al. (2022) state that Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Zoom, Skype, Blogging and LinkedIn, etc., are the preferred

communication tools by the libraries during a covid pandemic.

7.3. Public Relation

Libraries need good public relations to make themselves sustainable and visible among users. According to Aitufe (1993), public relation is a field of activity concerned with building mutual understanding between an organization and its constituent public. Through good public relations, libraries can effectively communicate their objectives and goals to accomplish coordination and support from the patrons and parent institutions. Social media can be a helpful tool to communicate policies and actions to the extensive public of the library for better public relations. Alansari (2013), in his study on the public relation in the academic libraries in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), states that social media has the potential to enhance the public relation in libraries. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are the top social media used by 70 percent of the respondent libraries.

7.4. Reference Services

In library services, reference service is essential because it is the first service that should further satisfy the user to fulfill all its needs. From the importance of reference service and the potential of social media, we may conclude that by combining these two, a library can enhance its all-other services to a great extent. Of all library services, reference service is the service that is most enhanced by social media. Using social media in reference service, a library can reflect the various aspects of the library related to its users, products, and other services. The paradigm shift in service delivery and access to resources, shrinking operating budgets and declining statistics of reference transactions have forced many academic libraries to revisit and reform reference services to make them more efficient, cost-effective and adaptive to

users' needs and preferences (Bandyopadhyay and Boyd-Byrnes 2016). Ahenkorah-Marfo and Akussah (2016) proposed six types of social media that can be used in reference services such as "(i) social networks (ii) bookmarking (iii) social news (iv) media sharing (v) microblogging (vi)blog comments and forums". Chaputula et al. (2020) revealed in their study the usage of WhatsApp in providing reference service to the Library of Mzuzu University users. The Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) Library integrates various web 2.0 technologies to provide users with information and reference services. They develop 'blogs and mashups', 'RSS feeds', 'social networks, and 'wikis' to communicate with, take feedback and provide helpful reference services (Lwoga 2014).

7.5. Marketing Library Products and Services

For libraries as non-profit organizations facing a significant challenge from the internet and different search engines, marketing is the technique through which libraries can show their potential and force users to use their services. Libraries must use modern and standard tools for marketing their products and services. Social media are such modern tools that can help libraries in better marketing. Luo et al. (2013), in a case study of Tsinghua University Library in China, present the successful use of video sharing sites for marketing library products and services. Tsinghua University Library made a series of short videos titled "Falling in Love with Library" and posted them on Youku (equivalent to YouTube in China), successfully increasing the brand value of the Library and awareness among the users. Alawadhi and Al-Daihani (2019) describe "factors like raising awareness, need analysis, and satisfaction assessment that make social media more useful for marketing". They show that Kuwait

academic librarians have a positive attitude towards using social media in library marketing. In a study, Joo et al. (2018) show that many public libraries in the USA use Facebook as a marketing tool, leading to increased user engagement. Stephens (2022) “reveals that many students of Nicholls State University Library use the different library services and products after seeing promotional videos on TikTok posted by the library”.

7.6. User Education

There is the widespread use of computers, telecommunications, and microelectronics by the libraries to enable online searching and easy access to information with the help of CD-ROM, databases, networking, multimedia, etc. With the advent of ICTs, user education programs have become essential to access library resources and services. Libraries can use social media for effective user education programs. “Libraries should more focus on bibliographic instructions, electronic information resource skills, information technology, and information literacy in user education programs rather than simple library orientation”(Aderibigbe and Ajiboye, 2013). Bokoh et al. (2022) stated that “YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook are the social media platforms that the libraries can use to provide lectures, tutorials, quizzes, etc, to library users and get feedback for the improvement of their services”. Social media have the great potential to provide these skills and training programs.

7.7. Library Notices

Libraries should notify their users about activities by providing information on various events (seminars, workshops, book fairs, etc.) they are organizing, news about the Library, newly added service, a new collection, new policies, etc. Social Media is a tool through which the Library can engage with several

users at a time and notify them about the critical notices of the Library. Many university libraries in South-West Nigeria are trying to incorporate Facebook and Twitter in disseminating information (Quadri and Idowu, 2016; Williams et al., 2019). Muhammad and Zhiwei (2021) suggested that libraries can use social media to develop an environment where libraries can communicate with users and make them aware of up-to-date information on current developments in the Library. “Greek Libraries use Facebook as the main communication tool and share the announcement of library operations” (Koulouris et al., 2020).

7.8. Online Help Services

Libraries provide reference services to users in many ways. Personal assistance is given to the users to use library resources and services easily. Reference service is the formal way of providing help to the users where users have to request assistance through a proper channel. But it often becomes difficult to go through appropriate channels, and users seek some informal way to seek help from a librarian. According to Zickuhr et al. (2013) research, 50 per cent of library users in America visit the Library to seek help from librarians. With social media, librarians can help library users in formal and informal ways. “Social media can be made a central medium of interaction by the librarians to interact with library patrons”(Ezeani and Igwesi 2012). WhatsApp, Facebook, and Telegram are some social networks through which librarians can provide online help to patrons in formal and informal ways.

7.9. Information Services

This service aims to assist the user in the most effective use of the resources and services by providing specific, exhaustive, and prompt information on demand and anticipation. The ‘Current Awareness Service’(CAS) and

'Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) are two basic information services. Peiris and Lakmali (2019) "found that the special libraries can provide CAS through email, social media, and library website". Omeluzor and Oyovwe-Tinuoye's (2017) "research show that ICTs such as blogs, RSS feed, Ask-a Librarian, Twitter, Google+, email, OPAC, Facebook, and YouTube can be used by libraries for delivery of SDI and CAS to their patrons."

7.10. News Dissemination

"To stay relevant in the socially networked environment and meet the growing needs of their users, libraries, therefore, need to embrace the new technologies proactively and face the challenges for better services delivery"(Ezeani and Igwesi 2012). It has become essential for libraries to update their users about the latest development of the Library so that users can easily use resources and services. Social media has the great potential to disseminate news to a large audience in less time. Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, etc., are social networks where news can be transmitted to large users by making groups, pages, forums, etc. During the covid pandemic, many "Greek Libraries used Facebook as a widely used platform to inform users about library operations and announcements" (Koulouris et al., 2020).

7.11. Latest Arrivals

Libraries always try to acquire new documents to satisfy the needs of their users. Hence according to the second ('every reader his/her book') and third law ('every book its reader') of library science, it becomes essential for the libraries to inform their users about the latest arrivals of documents. Libraries can implement social media in speed, accuracy, and relevancy tasks. Through photo-sharing sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., libraries can share the cover page of the latest arrivals and inform the users about the

relevancy of the documents according to the specific disciplines. Chakrabarti (2016) suggested that "web 2.0 technology 'blogs' can be used by the libraries for the latest arrivals announcement to encourage users to discuss library resources".

8. Social Media Influence on Library in Digital Environment

8.1. User Perspective

There is a new generation called Millennials or Generation Y. This generation defines new ways of communicating, collaborating and incorporating the technology into daily lives. Individuals in this generation are tech-savvy and always ready to experience new ways to communicate, like social media. "They favour bridging the social and academic activities by applying more flexible technology"(Williams, Dhoest, and Saunderson 2019). Social media provide more accessible communication and expression than traditional media for higher education students. Higher education students have all the resources and knowledge to use social media. Hence, they can become "more expressive on social media and discuss their needs productive" (Arif and Kanwal 2016). Komissarov and Murray (2016) found that students mostly rely on electronic means of information seeking. They find it more convenient than print. They also conclude that nearly 40 percent of students start their search by Google.com and some use Wikipedia. Students give more importance to the full-text availability of articles than the peer review, currency, and authenticity. Through social media, libraries can inform students of the right information source and guide them to full-text availability.

8.2. Library Perspective

The use of social media and web 2.0 technology has changed the relationship

between the Library and its users. The libraries' collections are transformed from print to digitals like e-books, e-journals, CD ROM, and other electronic resources with digitization and networking. Web 2.0 technologies enable users to engage in the development of library services. "Users are no longer passive information consumers but become the active information co-creator and provider" (Nguyen et al. 2012). "Now the concept of a library is shifting towards the 'participatory library, which means the services of the library will be more user-centric, and the involvement of users in the development of services will also be more" (Nguyen et al., 2012; Lankes et al., 2007). Social Media is a web 2.0 technology helping libraries to transform from document-centred storehouses to user-centred service delivery centres. In the covid pandemic, we have seen the potential of social media to disseminate news and increase awareness. Many libraries have also used social media platforms to make announcements and inform their users about library operations and events. "User's information-seeking behaviour change very quickly in this pandemic as this pandemic not only changes our lifestyle but also the way of learning practices and patterns"(Rafiq et al. 2021). In the same way, libraries also need to change their way of interacting with and delivering services to users. "It is now inexorable for libraries to ensure their presence on social media platforms and provide every opportunity to reach library users through various platforms, including telephone, email, and instant messages" (Ashiq et al. 2022).

9. Conclusion

Social media can impact libraries in many aspects like services, communication, interaction, engagement, etc. Social media technology is the web 2.0 technology that makes the community more collaborative in

content creation and access. The development of ICTs has changed the way of searching, browsing, retrieving, and requesting information. According to Statista (2021), "India is the second-largest consumer of smartphones and most of the smartphone users are of age group 16-24 followed by 24-35". Hence for libraries, social media is the most effective way to connect with large numbers of users. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Microblogging, etc., are the platforms that libraries can use to be more interactive and engaged. Libraries have many ways to connect, communicate and interact with library users simultaneously from a remote location. With this technological advancement, library users are also becoming dynamic in engaging with the Library. Social Media is about community and collaboration through social software. This helps users streamline their daily lives, organize their data, and share it with others. Furthermore, libraries can implement social media to provide help, services, news, and other communications to the users and enhance their existing library services into mobile-based library services, which is the hour for libraries to reach the expectation of present-day users.

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