# LIBRARY SERVICES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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**ABSTRACT** - *This paper discusses about how social media services in now a days Libraries and its use in library services and this paper also explores the possibilities of engaging users in library services through social media. The social media emerged as a very popular and powerful new form of social communication among the people and it becomes an additional and alternative communication tool for the libraries. The social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Blog, LinkedIn and so on.*

*Key-words* :  Social Media, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Library thing, library services.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is now becoming a very popular and powerful new form of social communication among the present generation. It is an open platform for free and social media is the future of sharing information to the people. Social media is a one of the countless array of web based tools and free platforms, that increases and developing the sharing information. The researchers and literatures clearly indicates that the number of users on popular social media sites is growing up all around the world since, the social media found to be a powerful and very useful tool for the libraries interact with library users in ways. What their users' needs and ultimately understand the users better through effective conversations on social media many libraries are already experimenting with different social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, YouTube and other popular tools to interact and connect with their patrons through the social media channels to each and every library users or members is now able to connect instantly.

## 2. SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system. Social media is the collective of

- YouTube: In institutions, events such as important highlights of inaugural lectures, conferences and workshops are disseminated via the YouTube.

- MySpace: In Academic institutions where the students are; libraries have taken advantage of this site to post

online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Some of the prominent examples include: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and MySpace etc. Social networking sites are two-way transparent communication that encourage a feedback mechanism; connecting people with shared interest.

- Facebook: most popular now because it is librarians-friendly, with many applications like JSTOR search, World Cat, 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.
- Twitter: Users can utilize this platform to type in short messages or status update. Users can send Instant Messages (IM) on complaints or ask questions on a particular issue and get a feedback on the spot using twitter. Blogs: Here, librarians can periodically post messages; share information on a particular subject or issue, and allow users 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 offers a platform for users to access, edit and contribute to content. This is a collaborative web page for developing web content.
- Library Thing: A tool that enriches the library OPAC. Once an account is created, a list of books with ISBNs is sent to Library Thing which sends back a piece of code which is pasted into the footer of the Library OPAC. Librarians can utilize this to send a list of current publications to users.
- LinkedIn: Librarians can get patrons connected with specialists in their particular field of interest via LinkedIn. Librarians can use this platform to render specialized services such as Strategic Dissemination of Information (SDI).

calendar, custom catalog search tools, and blog features to improve their presence.

## 3. WHY STUDY SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARY SERIVICES?

Social media has the potential to facilitate much closer relationships between libraries and their patrons – wherever users are based, and however they choose to learn about and access library services and resources. These tools are accelerating, and they will likely play an increasingly important role in library service provision and outreach in the future. On these related topics has been researched and compiled; an overview of current practices relating to the use by libraries of social media, from a world-wide perspective, web-based resource on social media for the library will provide ongoing updates sharing ideas and experiences.

## 4. SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARY SERIVICES

- To Promote any kind of library events

- To promote all types of library services

- To promote the library resources/collections

- To promote library guides, exhibition guides

- To receive complaints, suggestions, enquiries and feedback

- To retrieve information and to actively interact with the content as well as its creators

- To support collaborative work substituting old documents or PDF documents

- To enhance delivery of service and to contribute professional development

## 5. SOCIAL MEDIA OBJECTIVES

Libraries use social media to fulfill a range of objectives, with most focused on promotion (visibility for and usage of the library service and resources). However, broadcast/ informational communications are increasingly being supplemented with two-way communications designed to solicit feedback (e.g. for collection development), offer real-time customer service and build engagement with users. Social media is also increasingly being seen as a collection management tool. Use of social media for enhancing teaching and learning is currently a lower priority, but this will likely become an important activity in the near future, and librarians with their growing experience of using social media tools are well-placed to help develop institutional capabilities.

## 6. CURRENT SOACIAL MEDIA PRACTICES

In this section we examine current practices and preferences relating to library usage of social media. Our research highlights there is currently a high degree of experimentation and variation in how social media is currently being used by the library services; not surprising, as these channels are evolving all the time and gathering information on the impact of social media activities remains challenging

## 7. THE CHANGING LIBRARY ENVIRONMENT

Today, libraries are using the latest technologies and trends to make their services popular and user friendly. The concept of a library as physical place where one can visit to get information is rapidly changing to a social cyberspace where users access, communicate and contribute to existing knowledge. This is because the modern library of the 21st century is characterized with collective knowledge creation and enabling technologies, these are made possible with the present social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Library Thing, Blogs, MySpace, Wiki, etc. which provide interactive platform for users to access and generate content. Information is now produced in a variety of media whose representation can no longer be presented in the physical books alone. Libraries need to realize that in order to engage with their users they will need to reach them "in their preferred methods of communication".

## 8. CHALLENGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Challenges associated with using social media in libraries include the following:

- Social media can require considerable time commitment from library staff;

- Social media can require technological expertise, for example customizing applications to provide access to online catalogs;

- Levels of interest in and skills with using social media vary enormously across library staff;

- There are limited funds to support more advanced social media usage/ features and the training that would be required to enable this;

- A library needs to work hard to maintain engagement with library users and attract popularity (followers, likes and so on);

- It can be difficult to maintain library branding for content/resources made accessible via social media;

- There are potential copyright issues when using social media such as YouTube to build collections;

- Internet connectivity, technological infrastructure and government restrictions on the use of social media may restrict access.

The following table illustrates some of the ways commonly used social media tools:

## 9. SOCIAL MEDIA USES

| Social Media Tools | Uses |
|---|---|
| Facebook | • Distribute library news and information<br>• More social and less formal than Twitter – share photographs and run competitions<br>• Engagement with students |
| Twitter | • Distribute library news and information<br>• Provide customer service<br>• Build connections with researchers<br>• Build connections with other librarians and institutions |
| Pinterest | • Promote general library collections, digital and archive special collections and information literacy<br>• Set up of online repositories for students to pin researched references as part of collaborative group work<br>• Display book titles to save time browsing and promote new titles<br>• Provide an arena for students and course leaders to pin reviewed and recommended reading for a particular topic<br>• Develop communities with other online libraries |
| YouTube | • Streaming film collections<br>• Instructional 'how to' videos teaching information literacy skills and how to use library services and resources |

## 10. REASONS FOR USING SOCIAL MEDIA

- To seek opinion on the library and its services for self-evaluation purposes, to encourage debate and to instigate an opportunity to respond to library user feedback.

- To reach library users in their homes or 'virtual spaces' as today's modern online library is no longer solely relying on its physical space as an access point.

- To publicize events, services, news and presence.

- To encourage collaboration, for example through collection development and building repositories of collaborative content specific to certain user groups.

- To increase usage of library collections by promoting new and existing content.

## 11. ADVANTAGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA.

- It requires little training.

- It promotes library services and disseminates news quickly, delivering this information more directly to library users.

- It increases engagement and interactions with library users.

- It helps gather feedback to enhance user services

- The promotion of library holdings via social media can help increase usage of content.

- It enhances communication both within the library and with other departments

- It can be used for outreach activities through onward sharing, well beyond the institution itself, helping build connections and reputation more broadly.

- Social media allows user to create, connect, converse and share information

- It helps the Libraries in building collaborative networks with the users.

## 12. CONCLUSIONS

Social media is used by libraries to deliver a blend of customer services, news and updates, content/collection promotion, dissemination of the institutions research output, provision of educational tools and resources and for building relationships both within and outside of the institution. A wide range of social media channels are used, but as yet there is limited differentiation between how they are used. Facebook, Twitter, Library Thing, LinkedIn and Wikis remain dominant, but visual channels such as YouTube, Pinterest, Blog and some other Channels are rapidly on the rise. We anticipate that in the near future more channel-specific strategies will emerge. More widespread publically available studies are needed to show more successful in all libraries.

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