Social Networking Sites (SNSs) For Effective Library Services: A Look

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Abstract

The usage of social media is increasing day by day. The social networking sites are more powerful media because anybody can share information and give comments openly. The purposes of using different types of social networking sites are for communicate and share information worldwide. Many organizations and companies use social media and take advantage of it. Like that the impact of technological advancement is more on library services. This paper examines how libraries can adopt the social networking sites and will improve the social media skills to help patrons. The study is mainly focused on social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Wikis, LinkedIn, Flickr, Delicious, Youtube, Blogging, Library Thing, and Teacher Tube and its applications in libraries.

Keywords

Social Media, Social Networking Sites (SNSs), Library Service, Web 2.0

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1. Introduction

Social media is the social interaction among people in which they create, share or exchange information, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks (Wikipedia, 2014). Today youngster’s and older are spending more time on social networking sites. Libraries are part of our community, when libraries use social media application it will be closer to the community. The term social networking may be new, but the concepts behind it sharing the content; collaborating with others and creating community have been around for a long time. What is new in the digital medium, which makes connecting with other people faster, easier and more accessible to a wider population than it's ever been before. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) “social media is 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, captures the key terminology involved.” This study an attempt has been made to examine the applications of social media in libraries.

2. Literature Review

Today’s trend is to use Social networking sites are in effectively for different purposes. Chinwe (2012) discussed in his article “Using social media for dynamic library service delivery: the Nigeria experience” Nigerian Libraries can leverage on social networking and social media skills to provide dynamic library services in the face of dwindling economic problems in Nigeria. Bharat (2013) in his paper highlights the use of social network in the library services. Mishra (2008) is his article made an attempt to illustrate different social software tools and their effective utilization in the social networking environment. Chen., Chu, & Xu (2012) in their paper focuses on the interactions between libraries and social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and Weibo. Four types of interactions are examined: knowledge sharing, information dissemination, communication and knowledge gathering. Du Toit et al. (2013) explores the social media use in libraries. The establishment of social media for the SABC Media Libraries is discussed to demonstrate a practical implementation of social media in libraries and archives can be achieved. Seena (2014) discussed about the Web 2.0 use among library professionals.
3. Objectives

- To understand the use of social networking applications.
- To know how libraries are using social media technologies for providing library services.

4. How we can use social media for effective library services:

Few Examples

Following are some of the examples of how libraries across the globe are using social networking sites for providing library services.

4.1 Facebook and its Applications in Libraries

Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Libraries can freely create own account on it. Already some of the libraries are using Facebook for different purposes. They are publishing day today news, exhibitions, providing reference services and upcoming sharing workshop information, conducting online quiz’s and week end programs, creating public awareness program about libraries.

![Fig. 1. Library of Congress Facebook Page](image-url)
4.2 Twitter and its Application in Libraries

It is a free micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets in 140 characters. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. Twitter is one of the highly used social media tools. Libraries have been using this social networking site to provide library related information such as informing about new arrivals, event information, news announcements, etc. Libraries across the world mainly Library of Congress\(^1\), National Library of Australia\(^2\), academic libraries, public libraries have been using Twitter for their library related activities.

![World Digital Library Twitter Account](image)

Fig. 2. World Digital Library Twitter Account

4.3 Social Tagging and its Applications in Libraries

Social tagging or folksonomy is a user generated taxonomy used to categorize web contents such as web links, photos, web pages, videos and other online content. The developments of Delicious and Connotea, social bookmarking sites have made it huge success. User can tag the content they find it appropriate for them for later

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\(^1\) [https://twitter.com/librarycongress](https://twitter.com/librarycongress)

\(^2\) [https://twitter.com/nlagovau](https://twitter.com/nlagovau)
use. Delicious and Connotea and similar other sites can be used to create reference list or web subject directory.

Fig. 3. MIT Library Virtual Reference Page on Delicious.com

4.4 LibraryThing

LibraryThing is the online cataloguing applications. Users can catalog up to two hundred books. Many small libraries have now presence in LibraryThing. LibraryThing connects people with the same books, comes up with suggestions for what to read next and reviews find for books users like. Users can search Library of Congress, Amazon.com and more than 600 library catalog online. Libraries have found this application very useful for copy cataloguing purpose as well.
4.5 YouTube and its Applications in Libraries

YouTube is a very well known social media sites. According Alexa.com a web traffic analytics, YouTube is one of the highly visited websites on the Globe. User generated videos can be uploaded and shared via YouTube. Users can view user uploaded video contents for free of cost. This made YouTube a huge success among web users. Libraries in many of the countries have been using YouTube for disseminating library related video contents. Libraries have been using YouTube as library virtual tour guides. Users can download or view library tour guides via YouTube and learn themselves on how to use library better for the studies and research activities.
4.6 TeacherTube and its Applications

Teacher Tube is a video sharing website similar to, and based on, YouTube. It is designed to allow those in the educational industry, particularly teachers, to share educational resources such as video, audio, documents, photos, groups and blogs. The site contains a mixture of classroom teaching resources and others designed to aid teacher training. Librarians can leverage this tool to provide various educational related contents for library users and also teachers who are keen to use video contents in classroom teaching environments.
5. Conclusion

User attitude towards library is changing day by day. User wants most practical and speed information in e-learning age. But providing quick and easy retrieval information to user is a great challenge to library. Therefore library should find and search some new techniques for impacting valuable information to the user. Marketing of library services can be possible by using social software tools like YouTube, Blogger, Ning etc. Catalogue some of your library books on Library Thing. Library can host their personal websites in blogger. Digital video library can be framed by using the most successful tool like YouTube and Teacher Tube in Library. Support just-in-time reference, since students may find it easier and more comfortable to communicate with a librarian through this medium than in traditional ways. Professionals can put their collections on flicker. After all it will be helpful to provide the means to learn more about students, which can help libraries, better meet their needs.
References


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http://eprints.rclis.org/16844/1/Social%20networking%20in%20Library.pdf 19 November 2014