Use of Twitter in Libraries at a Glance

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Abstract:
Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks. There are many social media categories; Twitter is one among many which facilitate the communication by providing a faster, easier and economical means to interact with massspectators in different parts of the world.

Keywords: Social media, Twitter and Libraries

Introduction
Information Communication Technology provides society with new chances to design all things well. Innovations in Technology’s are learned quickly and the usage of computer and internet is increasing more and more every day by all. Following social media is one of the main reasons of internet usage. Though the use of social media communication technologies is highly emphasized in disseminating education and bridging the geographical gap, but these technologies will be useful only when the users are aware of the facilities offered by education organisations. Social media, being a communication channel can act as a catalyser for other networks also. Individuals are no longer just spectators or readers but they transform into players who openly spread information with the help of social media. Social Media Categories are, Social Media Tutorials; Facebook; Twitter; Social Networking; Marketing & Business ; Mobile Apps; Photo & Image Sharing ;Social Sites Directory; LinkedIn & Business Tools ;Video: YouTube & Social TV; Web Design & Blogging and Social Media News and Updates.

History of Twitter
Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone and Noah Glass. By July 2006 the site was launched. The service rapidly gained worldwide popularity. In 2013 twitter has become internationally identifiable by its signature bird logo; the new logo is like a Mountain Bluebird. Twitter is easy to use. It allows users to update their profile via their mobile phone through text messaging and apps released for certain smart phones and tablets.

Twitter can be used to elicit ideas and suggestions, a great way of getting know and build relationship with new people. Twitter is economical as well as affordable.Twitter (www.twitter.com/) is the most popular micro-blogging service and plays an important role in social network. The service has rapidly gained worldwide popularity, with over 500 million registered users.

The above screenshot is just how the open page of the twitter looks like.

**How to start with twitter?**

If the Twitter app is on the Android device like in smart phone or tablet, open https://twitter.com and update email address in the Settings then follow the instructions. On the other hand log in to twitter account on https://twitter.com in the computer and sign up using username and password and start following and tweeting.

**Characteristics of Twitter**

Twitter is a communication tool. Tweets are text based posts displayed on the author’s profile page and delivered to the author’s subscribers who are known as followers. Twitter allows users from across the globe to share information through private and public messages. Twitter has over 500 million registered users today. Some Twitter users may have millions of followers, i.e., Barack Obama has 28 million followers. Twitter users construct their own profiles, choose whom they want to follow and send their messages defined as “tweet” in a way to be seen by their followers. Tweets posted by users appear in reverse chronological order on the user’s profile. Twitter is a service for friends, family and co-workers to communicate through the exchange of quick, frequent answer to one simple question. Twitter prompts users to use of short messages that range from humour and musings on life to links and breaking news.
The most popular celebrity who has the maximum followers on Twitter for an Indian, of 18.8M who is following 995 twitter accounts is Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan, whose tweets on the current issues will be covered in news media also.

Twitter is becoming a most popular media which has been used by almost all celebrities in the entire field like political leaders, film actors, sports person and many leaders keep twitting every now and then, which will reach the followers of that twitter. Even the institutions which want to convey message to the mass are using twitter, because it will reach to the followers who need that information at their convenience. Twitter is a quick and convenient way of sharing Web pages; most tweets for sharing Web pages contain few or even no original opinions and comments of the users. They copy and paste URLs into tweets or just click embedded Tweet Buttons to share the Web pages. A tweet can be posted within an extremely short period of time such as 5 seconds, which is far inadequate for posting a traditional blog article. Events that were once closed become open to a much larger community; this has advantages such as increasing the audience for the message, mobilizing people into action, and enabling those unable to attend an event to share in the community.

Social Media, its Applications in Libraries.

Libraries can use social networking to create professional connections, YouTube can be used to share videos conferences, workshops and library events, libraries can promote services, collection, events and resources by using social media. Then wikis can be used for collaborative work, Facebook can be used to get library news and events out in the world, IM (Instant Messaging) can be used for reference/research assistance, Twitter can be used for communication, through Blogs libraries can keep current their users with the developments in the field of librarianship (Khan & Bhatti 2012). Websites area new technology offering promising new outreach options for academic librarians. They provide a new platform for reaching
students beyond the traditional library building and Website by allowing students to access librarians and the library’s resources without leaving the comfort of the Websites they use the most.

**Use of Twitter in Libraries**

Libraries have witnessed a great metamorphosis in recent years both in their collection development and in their service structures. Thus Libraries are using technology to improve the management of scholarly information to strengthen and speed access to scholarly information to the users. Twitter is a microblogging and social networking service with millions of members and growing at a tremendous rate. With the buzz surrounding the service have come claims of its ability to transform the way people interact and share information and calls for public figures to start using the service. People are primarily using Twitter to disperse information, particularly links to news articles about themselves and to their blog posts, and to report on their daily activities. These tend not to provide new insights into government or the legislative process or to improve transparency; rather, they are vehicles for self-promotion.

Information professionals know that twitter is a fast-growing, free messaging service for people, can make good use of it without spending much time or effort. At present number of libraries and librarians are taking the help of twitter to engage readers to spread information. Here are many tips that can help library professionals to use twitter in their libraries.

![Twitter page of British Library](https://twitter.com/britishlibrary)

The above screenshot represent the twitter page of British Library, which has a 1.2M followers, 7716 tweets with 575 likes. British library keep up to date with all news like date timings of exhibition of literature and music of West Africa...to its followers with further updates about the same event and so on.
Advantages of Twitter in Libraries

- A library could share all kinds of news that users want through twitter.
- Twitter is also accessible via mobile device, making easy to transfer and share comments or information.
- Short messages about events such as readings, lectures, book sales, new arrivals and programmes.
- Twitter post can link to interesting news stories about libraries.
- Twitter accounts don’t get hacked so it is beneficial for library.
- Colleagues, students and friends may be connected with other librarians, friends and students because of twitter.
- During seminars and conferences twitter feeds will allow user to keep up with registration deadlines, speakers and other details all the time without having to visit the site.
- Library vendors like JSTOR, EBSCo... are started with twitting so that the librarians also have the new arrivals and also details of the vendors.
- Many major news sites like CNN and BBC have twitter feeds. This makes it easy to just quickly check latest news and information to use in the library reference service.
- Through twitpic, photos of staff and library can be shared.
- Help others by sharing knowledge.
- Get advice from followers.

Limitations of Twitter in Library Environment

- Lack of time, privacy and identity theft.
Too many social media tools to learn.
Lack of knowledge about usage.
Slow speed of internet.
Inadequate funds.
Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media.
Inadequate library staff and inadequate training opportunities.
Electricity failure and slow speed of internet.

Conclusion

Twitter was used as an interaction and communication tool because many libraries had a large number of followers. Although library tweets were not determined by the number of followers, libraries should use a professional staff member for regularly updating and maintaining the library twitter feeds to attract more users. The libraries use twitter as a marketing tool to inform patrons about library news, events, workshops, exhibitions and facilities, and to promote library collections and services. Libraries utilize twitter effectively for users to view library activities, collections and services in a focused and clear manner. Marketing library services and events will positively benefit libraries in terms of usage increase, value and image enhancement, user education and changed perceptions. The findings also show that links were extensively used in libraries’ tweets, suggesting that Twitter has permitted libraries to disseminate in-depth information and different types of content to remote patrons, and 140 characters is not a limitation. Therefore, Twitter may be used by libraries as a source of detailed information that may be important to patrons. In addition, it is interesting to see that Twitter was used as an interaction and conversational tool, rather than a broadcasting medium, where libraries exchanged suggestions and greetings with followers, expressing a warm and welcoming environment. Furthermore, Twitter encourages followers to interact with libraries by retweet the followers’ tweets, mentioning followers in tweets, replying to questions and solving problems efficiently.

References


