

Social Media as A Tool for Marketing and Promotion of Library Information Services and Products

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ABSTRACT: Today social media are used by libraries as vehicles for outreach and promoting services, programs and new resources as well as providing general information. It also helps in distance learning and knowledge sharing. This paper throws light on different types of social media tools available and how they can be useful for information creation, sharing and dissemination for library information purpose.

KEYWORDS: Social media, Social network, Facebook, Twitter, Information marketing

INTRODUCTION

In this electronic information age internet has emerged into an interactive platform where anyone can participate in content creation and contribute their knowledge to make it sea of information. Advent of web2.0 has brought a revolution in this regard. Almost everyone in society has their digital identity and have constant presence in this virtual world.

There is a strong growth in number of internet users in web based as well as mobile users. Some of the most popular online activities are social networking, online search, and online video. All these Technological development has affected information communication channels like libraries and knowledge centers both in term of information space and information practice. Library can use Social media as a pathway to promote its resources and attracts its users for maximum usability. Social media make it more convenient for library to reach large number of patron community, target specific audience and provide them an opportunity for active interaction with library.

THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Merriam-Webster defined social media as "Forms of electronic communication (such as Web sites) through which people create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, etc."

In Techtarget website describes "social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. It implies to websites and social networking, social book marking, social curation and wiki" In dictionary.com website it is defined as websites and other online means of communication that are used by large groups of people to share information and to develop social and professional contacts."

Wikipedia: Social media use web-based and mobile technologies on smartphones and tablet computers to create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content or pre-made content posted online. According to Chris Garrett, "Social media is the tools, services, and communication facilitating connection between peers with

common interests. “According to Dave Kerpen, “Social media is online text, pictures, videos and links, shared amongst people and organizations”.

So social media implies to websites and web 2.0 internet based applications where people connect themselves virtually, create community and collaboratively participates in content creations in form of photos, videos; share their thoughts via posts and comments. It includes spectrum of digital content including but not limited to videos, images, print based materials, status updates, websites and hyperlink to other types of media.

SOME POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media networks are a major resource for both small and big organizations that are looking to promote their brands and services on the Internet. The platforms are easy to use and to reach large audiences. For better marketing and promotion of our services and products we need to know the most popular social media sites which can bitterly help us to fulfill our target. Some popular social media networks are depicted in table 1:

Table 1. Some popular social media networks

| Name of social media | Founded in | What it is? | Number of active users monthly (in million)(sept 2016) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Facebook | February 4, 2004, | a social media network | 1712 |
| Twitter | March 21, 2006 | A micro blogging online social networkingwith 140characters limit post | 313 |
| LinkedIn | December 14, 2002 | A site for professional networking for people looking to connect with people in similar field | 106 |
| Google+ | December 15, 2011 | A social media network | 418 |
| YouTube | February 14, 2005 | A video-based social media website | 1 billion website visitors |
| Pinterest | March 2010 | a photo sharing website or digital bulletin boards where users can pin their content. | 100 |
| Instagram | October 6, 2010 | a visual social media platform together with video and photo editing features | 500 |
| Tumblr | February 2007 | A microblogging site that allows quote posts, chat posts, video and photo posts as well as audio posts | 555 |
| Flickr | February 10, 2004 | an online image and video hosting platform | 112 |
| Reddit | June 23, 2005 | a social news and entertainment networking website where registered users can submit content such as direct links and text posts | 231 |
| Delicious | September 2003 | a social bookmarking web service for discovering, storing and sharing web bookmarks | 53 |
| Viber | December 2, 2010 | a Voice over IP (VoIP) and instant messaging app for mobile devices | 249 |

(Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>; <http://smallbiztrends.com/2016/05/popular-social-media-sites.html>)

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MARKETING SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

- **Interact with users**
In marketing, frequent interaction is very necessary to make a big impact. Facebook and Twitter is meant for interaction and libraries are the social hub to connecting links.
- **Library news and events**
Libraries organizing events like book fair, library orientations or database demonstration they can put it on Facebook and Twitter. Social media is great for updating people on what is going on.
- **New arrival book list**
When library adds new books into its collection, they upload that list on their web sites. The list may be uploaded and shared on Facebook and Twitter.
- **Videos (Library Orientation, Tutorial videos and Database guide)**
Now library uses frequently web videos for their learning. Library can share their programs and other library related videos e.g. use database searching effectively, various research tools like: Turnitin, Mendley etc.
- **Posting pictures**
Library photos like stack area, library building, staff photos can be uploaded and share on Facebook and Twitter, so user becomes familiar with library.
- **Community information**
Library also disseminates community information, which is very important for the library users if it can be uploaded on social media.
- **Library users feedback**
Social networking is built for conversations, so librarians can feel free to ask questions to users, fans or followers of libraries. Questions also get the most response. Ask interesting things that you actually want to know, such as, “why do you use the library?” when people answer, continue the conversation with your patrons.

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS AND ITS POSSIBLE IMPLICATION IN LIBRARY

Social networking helps librarian to share information with patrons and students in the easiest way for digital library environment. Librarian can use in three broad activities in library and information services. The major three are Information communication, Knowledge distribution, and knowledge organization. In this process librarian can keep constant touch and effective interaction with staff, patrons, and faculty in online collaborative environment. The social networking tools that can be practiced by the library for the aforementioned purposes are:

- **MySpace**
MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com>) and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>) are extremely popular social networking sites which primarily have a social function allowing people to make friends, talkonline and share resources.
- **Facebook**
Another social media site frequented by students, Facebook is librarian friendly. Group communication among patrons can be possible in web 2.0.

- **Ning**
Librarian can use this tool to get connected with students, library associations, and more. You can also use it to share information with many people at a time.
- **Blog**
By creating a blog, you'll be able to disseminate information to lots of people at one time. Whether you're updating students on new collections, or just conversing with library staff, blogs are a powerful tool, especially when combined with RSS.
- **LinkedIn**
This social networking site for professionals is a great way to get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information. Whether that's you, faculty, authors, historians, or other sources, they can find them in your LinkedIn network.
- **Twitter**
Use Twitter, a microblogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections, new arrival, current content services of library.
- **Information Distribution**
Information sharing is the major part and crucial area where professionals should look seriously while considering and designing library activities in digital age. Patron's satisfaction should be given first and foremost priority by providing right information at the right time in a right way from anywhere. Library professionals should rethink for implementing web 2.0 technologies in library services from early period.
- **Flickr**
This image distribution tool is a great way to share new image collections. Library can share photo collection of workshops; conference and different programmes that are organised within the campus. You can create image sets with metadata, as well as take advantage of the many plugins available for Flickr users. Flickr users can also help gather missing information about images.
- **YouTube**
Library video and e-learning tutorials, events and other video library services can be effectively promoted and webcast through YouTube.
- **TeacherTube**
TeacherTube, which is a YouTube for teachers, presents an excellent opportunity for instructor-librarian collaboration. Instructors can guide students to helpful library resources, and vice versa.
- **Second Life**
On Second Life, you can create a virtual library with streamed media, discussions, classes, and more.
- **Wikipedia**
Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia updated by users. You can use this tool to share your knowledge by editing, or simply point library patrons in the right direction. You can also host your library websites on wiki software like PBWiki.
- **PBwiki**
PBwiki is the world's largest provider of hosted business and educational wikis. It encourages collaboration from students, a way to showcase work, and offers a central gathering point for information. PBwiki offers controlled access, so you can give some editing privileges, while others

can only read.

- **Footnote**
On Footnote, you'll get access to original historical documents, and can update them with your own content and insights. You can even find personal anecdotes and experiences you won't find in reference books.
- **Community Walk**
Community Walk offers a geographical way to interpret text and events. You can use it for instruction, such as showing someone where to find a book, or walk them through a historical and geographical timeline.
- **SlideShare**
Encourages faculty, staff, and students to share their slideshow presentations for the greater community to access on SlideShare. It's a great way to disseminate information among research community to the field of research and development (R&D) activities.
- **Digg**
Digg is a great way to find useful content that you wouldn't come across in traditional ways. Find stories here, then share them with others using Digg's blog function.
- **StumbleUpon**
Another way to find great content is with StumbleUpon. You can channel surf the Internet to find useful content, research tools, and more.
- **Daft Doggy**
If you've found a particularly good resource, you can use DaftDoggy to create a website tour with instructions, pointing out useful references and items of note.
- **Knowledge Organization**
Social software can help the professionals in KO environment for getting handy information which can be accessible with the social networking technologies in web 2.0 milieu. The below mentioned tools can effectively in library and information centre for patrons as:
- **aNobii**
Social networking site like aNobii helps book lovers to share reviews and recommendations. It also prepares due date alerts, lending, and discussions.
- **Del.icio.us**
With this social bookmarking tool, you can create a custom directory for library patrons. Teach them to search by your tags, and it will be easy to find useful Internet research links.
- **Netvibes**
In Netvibes' new Ginger beta, you can create a public page that can be viewed by anyone. You can use it to help guide patrons to helpful internet sources, news feeds, and more. It can be integrated with many of the tools mentioned here, like Flickr and library blogs.
- **Connotea**

Connotea is a great reference tool, allowing you to save and organize reference links and share them with others. They can be accessed from any computer and offer integration with lots of other tools.

- **LibraryThing**

This social cataloging network is great for librarians, and you can catalog along with Amazon, the Library of Congress, and more than 200 other libraries around the world. You'll get recommendations and easy tagging as well.

- **lib.rario.us**

Another social cataloging site, you can put mediasuch as books, CDs, and journals on display for easy access and tracking (Hupp, 2008).

BENEFITS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARY

Social network usage by consumers is highly diverse platform such as facebook or google+ are highly focused on exchanged between friends and family and constantly pushing interaction through features like photo or status sharing and social games. Other social media like tumblr or twitter are microblogging which gives rapid communication. So social media mainly focus on community and user generated contents.

Library can take advantage of social media presence of their patrons. So that library can easily reach large number of patrons anywhere any time they want. That can increase awareness about our available resources and services and also attract attention of users towards library which gives much visibility for and usage of the library service and resources and increase reputation of library. Using these social media library can also build an online community and engage their users in sharing useful and interesting information. Social media can also help library in collection development and help them to present their resources in many dynamic interesting ways e.g. YouTube for video delivery, Pinterest for giving information in photos and giving links to contents etc. Library can easily get feedback from users which help them to evaluate their resources and services and accordingly library can plan and implement better tactics to improvise services.

CONCLUSION

In today world there is information explosion and library patrons have varied information needs and hurried in time. Social media is the one way solution to effectively and efficiently manage these information and meet their needs at their door steps. Social media can also be like a bridge between the users and the resources of library. Social media is like a mirror of a library which promotes already existed contents as well as latest updates in the library.

NOTES

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/social_media
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