WEB 2.0 TECHNOLOGY, SOCIAL ONLINE NETWORKING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Abstract

Social networking is a social structure that lets the users interact and work in collaboration with other users in an environment where the facility to browse, search, invite friends, to connect and interact with web world, is available. Today, libraries are using latest trends to make their services popular and user friendly especially in western countries. These trends are now catching up with Indian library professionals also. Libraries can provide numerous services to users with the implication of web2.0 technology in libraries. It represents a shift from the passive experience of static read only web pages to the participatory experience of dynamic and interactive web pages. The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of implication of web 2.0 technologies and social online networking on libraries.

Keywords: Web 2.0, Social Networking, Academic Libraries, Blogs, Wikis, Face book, Twitter

1.   Introduction:

The worldwide web has undergone many innovative changes, such as changes in application design, development technologies, tools and services provided. Information landscape and information seeking behavior has changed noticeably over the past two decades. Users are beginning to expect exhaustive and expeditious information in their search for information. In the present scenario the users are no longer passive consumers of information but would also like to contribute and share their recommendations, views, knowledge and opinions with other likeminded peers. Social networking technologies have substantial implications and these technologies can potentially be used in the information literate community to collect, organize and disseminate intellectual information to the user community. Libraries are responding to the popularity of social networking sites and their expanding role in creating, using and sharing of information by engaging them as a central medium for interacting with

library patrons and providing services to meet their information needs. The web 2.0 technologies facilitate and develop several interactive websites.

2.   Web 2.0:

The term Web 2.0 was supposedly coined in 2004 by Tim O'Reilly. The term Web 2.0 refers to the growth of online services that provides assurance collaboration, communication and information sharing. It represents a shift from the passive experience of static read only web pages to the participatory experience of dynamic and interactive web pages.

2.1 Tim O'Reilly : "Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform; delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an 'architecture of participation,' and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences."

3.   Library 2.0:

Library 2.0 is a new way of providing library services through new internet technologies, with emphasis on "user-centered" change and interaction and delivery of library services in an innovative way. This spectrum is characterized by open communication, participation, collaboration and content creation. The application of concepts and technologies of web 2.0 applied to the library services and collection is named as "Library 2.0". Library 2.0 also calls for libraries to encourage user participation and feedback in the development and maintenance of library services. The active and empowered library user is a significant component of library 2.0. Information and ideas are shared in both directions – from the library to the user and from the user to the library.

4.   Meaning of Social On-line Networking:

Social On-line Networking leads to grouping of individuals into specific groups, like small rural communities or a neighborhood subdivision. Social networking websites function like an online community of internet users. It allows an individual to create a profile for themselves on the service and share that profile with other users with similar interests to create a social network. Users can usually interact, post photographs, music and videos on their site.

5.   Definition:

5.1   The Oxford English Dictionary defines: Social networking as "the use or establishment of social networks or connections; the use of Web sites which enable users to

interact with one another, find and contact people with common interests, etc." (Social Networking, 2010).

5.2   Boyd and Ellison: defines social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site.

6.   Reasons why Libraries should engage in Social Networking:

There are many arguments which compel libraries to use social media.

- Social media is a way for libraries to get into patrons wherever they are.
- Promote library services
- Market library holdings
- Provides updates on library events
- Suggest websites/links/on-line resources
- getting positive and negative feedbacks
- As an alternative to traditional ways e.g.: bookmarks, announcements in calendars of events, Newspaper ads press releases etc.
- Leads to increased user participation, interaction and engagement
- Increase professional development, current awareness of library trends and emerging technologies, as well as expansion of professional networks, and thus potential collaboration with other colleagues

7.   Application of Social Networking Sites on Libraries:

The application of social networking facilitates communication between library and users. If on one hand these tools save money in terms of development and installation, they do require an investment of time because the librarian will need to update a Blog or a Wiki constantly.

7.1   Online Chat, Instant Messaging and Video Conferencing:

Instant messaging is a form of real-time direct text based chatting, communication between two or more people using personal computers or other devices, along with shared clients. The user's text is conveyed over a network, such as internet. More advanced instant messaging software clients also allow enhanced modes of communications, such as live voice or video calling and inclusion of links to media. Instant messaging allows effective and efficient communication, allowing immediate reply. Some of the audio visual aids which help the librarian to provide their library services like reference, CAS, SDI, transformation of data, discussion, providing recent and necessary information online to the users. Users can get necessary information at anytime, anyplace without much wastage of time.

Free chat softwares:

Some of the examples are:

- Yahoo Messenger- http://messenger.yahoo.com
- MSN Messenger-http://get.live.com/messenger
- Google talk http://www.google.com/talk

7.2   Blog:

A blog is a website usually maintained by an individual with regular entries, comments, description of events or other materials such as graphics or videos. Libraries use blogs as news vehicles, venue for staff communication, used by libraries as promotional, alerting and marketing tools, and providing a useful method of promoting new services, alerting users to changes and offering advice and support library instructions and as a forum for peers/colleagues to express opinions on library issues and concerns. In library blogs typical posting include information about fresh arrivals, e-databases. News and services can be flashed for wider effects. A venue for writing, peer editing, sharing and posting articles, stories illustrated books and opinions on current events and personal experiences etc. The librarian will need to exercise a great deal of expertise and speed when adding a blog .It can be easily maintained and updated through library websites.

Some of the examples are:

- *blogs.loc.gov › Blogs › Library of Congress Blog*
- *yalsa.ala.org/blog/about*
- *lispp.blogspot.com/2012/04/library-associations-and-societies.html*

7.3   Wikis:

Wikis is a web page that is accessible to anyone with a web browser and an internet connection. Allows readers to collaborate with others in writing it and add, edit and change the web page's content. Libraries can use Wikis as a communication tool to enable social interaction among librarians and patrons. Users can share information, ask and answer questions, and the librarians can do the same within a Wiki and record of these transactions can be kept for future. Transcripts of such question-answer sessions would serve as resources for the library to provide as reference. Wikis are essentially open web-pages, where anyone registered with the wiki can publish to it, amend it, and change it.

Some of the examples are:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Congress
- *wikis.ala.org/yalsa*
- *www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov › ... › J Med Libr Assoc › v.100 (1); Jan 2012*

7.4   RSS (Really Simple Syndication):

Really Simple Syndication is one of the tools used for the distribution of information online with cell phones, handhelds, database, etc. A message sent from a cell phone can be received from a Blog and sent automatically to an email. The ability of the RSS is to funnel through many types of technology and present the information into an easy-to-read format. The benefit of having an RSS is that they save time; one can inform others of purchases, exhibitions, or other events of the library. It is possible to select which links can be distributed, saving time to the costumers and reinforcing the credibility of the information. Already libraries are creating RSS feeds for users to subscribe to, including updates on new items in a collection, new services, and new content in subscription databases.

Some of the examples are:

- *libraries.mit.edu/news/rss-feeds*
- www.loc.gov/rss
- www.loc.gov/rss

7.5   Tagging:

Another web 2.0 feature which is becoming common in library community is called tagging. It is described as a process by which the resources in a collection are assigned tags in the form of words, phrases, codes and other strings of characters. This allows users to add and change the data and metadata. The advantage of user tags is that it helps the data to be more easily searchable. Flickr, Delicious are some of the web based examples of tagging. In library 2.0 users could tag the library's collection and thereby participate in the cataloguing process. The best thing about tagging is that everyone is allowed to categorize the information, the way they want.

Some of the examples are:

- https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/yalsa
- www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/alltags

7.6   Face book:

Face book is one of the most popular social networking websites on the internet. Face book is a popular destination for users to setup their own personal web pages, connect with friends, share pictures, share movies, talk about what you're doing, etc. Most popular, it is librarian friendly with many apps like JSTOR search, Worldcat and much more. They use it as board or bulletin for their events like exhibition events. Some libraries, librarians and library organizations also create their own face book page to provide efficient and effective communication to the users, through discussion and chat etc.

Some of the examples are:

- http://www.facebook.com/pages/indianlibraryassociation/103391049715355
- http://www.facebook.com/pages/inflibnet/137300766292864
- https://www.facebook.com/yalsa
- https://www.facebook.com/SAGELibraryNews

7.7   Podcasting:

Podcasting is a way of making audio or video files available on the internet that can either be listened to or viewed on a PC or downloaded to a hand-held device such as an iPod or mp3 player. A podcast will be treated as a sound recording (audio podcasts) or a film (video podcasts, known as vodcasts). Podcasts may also include images, including PowerPoint presentations. Podcast is now popularly used by libraries for book talk. Some libraries also use podcast to provide library instructions and information literacy programmes. It can also be used in libraries to supply audio tutorial materials and lecture notes to students.

Some of the examples are:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcast
- *www.digitalpreservation.gov › News Archive*
- *yalsa.ala.org/blog/category/podcasts*

7.8   You Tube:

You Tube is a great network of users posting video blogs. Libraries are tapping social video such as video blogging and you tube to create a presence in their library websites. These are being used as marketing tools. Videos or programmes and 'what's new' segments and interviews can be posted at the library's website. Library professionals comprise a significant portion of viewers for library promotional videos.

Some of the examples are:

- www.youtube.com/user/LibraryofCongress
- www.ala.org › YALSA
- www.youtube.com/user/AmLibraryAssociation

7.9   Flickr:

Libraries also use web 2.0 platforms as a channel for collection development. For this purpose Flickr is used. It can store and share photos and images for different areas. Flickr is being used by an increasing number of libraries for providing access to collections and services for their communities. Libraries are also using Flickr to build community engagements. Librarians can organize their images by adding titles, descriptions, tags,

creating "photo sets". Librarians can also edit the uploaded images within the Flickr website itself.

Some of the examples are:

- www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress
- www.flickr.com/groups/yalsa
- *www.flickr.com/photos/ala_members*

7.10   Twitter:

A micro blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collection. Twitter is a fantastic way to get the pulse of what's going on around the world. A library could share all kinds of news that patrons want. Short messages can tell people about events such as readings, lectures, and book sales; newly available resources; or changes in the library hours. Twitter posts can link to interesting news stories about literacy or about libraries.

Some of the examples are:

- https://twitter.com/yalsa
- https://twitter.com/SAGElibrarynews
- https://twitter.com/Librarian

7.11   Social Book Marking:

A social bookmarking service is a centralized online service which enables users to add, annotate, edit, and share bookmarks of web documents. It is a method for internet users to organise, store, manage and search for bookmarks of resources online. Libraries can create a social bookmarking site for members of their institutions so that sites of interest, bibliographies or links to other user-created content can be collected and shared by the user's community. Social book marking services are: Delicious, CiteULike, Sitejot, Spurl.net, Furl etc.

Some of the examples are:

- www.mlanet.org/resources/web20_resources.html
- www.library-mistress.net/library20/lib20-bookmarking.html
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_bookmarking

7.12   MySpace:

One of the most popular social networks and one of the most viewed web site on the internet. My space is an organized online community where user can personalize their interests and

activities on web. They can browse, search, invite friends to connect and interact, share film reviews, make comments, post mail and blog entries, post classified ads etc. They create or join groups for friends with common interests. Libraries are using Myspace to connect with their younger patrons.

Some of the examples are:

- *in.myspace.com/atyourlibrary*
- https://myspace.com/libofcongress
- *yalibrarynews.blogspot.com/2006/12/yalsa-myspace.html*

7.13   LinkedIn:

LinkedIn is growing so quickly, it's adding a new member each second."It is one of the best locations to connect with current and past co-workers and potentially future employers for professionals to get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information.

Some of the examples are:

- www.linkedin.com/title/librarian
- *developer.linkedin.com/documents/libraries-and-tools*
- www.linkedin.com/directory/companies/libraries.html

8.   Benefits:

- Users participate in the creation of the content and services.
- A library can post images of books for discussion groups, post news about the library, and post pictures and videos of the library and library events. They also allow libraries to interact with patrons through discussion boards, image tagging, and comments.
- Social networking sites not only allow libraries to reach out to patrons, but they also allow patrons to reach out to libraries. Patrons can leave feedback for libraries and can make suggestions to improve services in a setting that is comfortable for the patrons.
- Social networking sites also allow library users to find information about the library in an interface with which they are already familiar. Social networking allows libraries to market library services, providing increased opportunities to connect with current and potential library users.
- It provides multimedia experience. Both the collections and services of Library 2.0 contain video and audio components.
- Allows the library users to discuss ideas, post news, ask questions and share links.

- Facilitates open communication, leading to enhanced information discovery and delivery.

9.   Drawbacks:

Social networking does not come without drawbacks.

- Social networking sites generally appeal to a younger demographic. Thus, particularly elderly users will not be reached by such efforts.
- Some libraries also face problems while using social networking sites, because library filters can block them which limit the impact of use of social sites. In addition, some users of social network sites are resistant to connect with institutions.
- Opens up the possibility for hackers to commit fraud and launch spam and virus attacks.
- It may result in negative comments from users about the sites or potential legal consequences if users use these sites to view objectionable, illicit or offensive material.
- Potentially results in reduced productivity, especially if employees are busy updating profiles, etc.

  We are living in one of the most exciting and challenging times for the information industry. As information professionals, it is our responsibility to deliver services including disseminating information, facilitating access to and sharing of information, enabling collaboration etc. The application of web 2.0 technologies in libraries are helping us to take services to a new level and make them more interactive and participatory for user community. Any library looking at using social networking tools must weigh the benefits and drawbacks based on the unique situation of that library.

10.   Suggestions:

- In India, an information professional doesn't seem to be interested in implementing the web 2.0 technologies. Seeing the benefits they should focus on implementing Web 2.0 technology with determination.
- In developing countries like India one of the reasons of not implementing the web 2.0 technologies would be lack of financial resources, so UGC should provide much more financial Support.
- The web 2.0 technologies are very useful for user-centered reference services. So, it is necessary to implement web 2.0 tools.
- Library professionals should come up with new technologies to provide more and more web based services to their users. To enhance this in-service training should also be provided to the library professionals which will help to keep themselves update with the changing technology.

11.   **Conclusion:**

Uses of Social Networking service consist of developing library resources, connecting staff with users, and searching library catalogues and other online resources. Social networking sites can be used to connect with patrons and to connect with other librarians. Social networking technologies include sites such as MySpace, Face book, Delicious, Flickr, Twitter, blogs, wikis and many more. Many librarians advocate using these sites to benefit the library, as they present another avenue to reach out to patrons. The use of social software among library members has rapidly increased and these tools whether in library or other places is considered to meet information needs of the present day society. A decade ago libraries implemented one, or perhaps two, applications. Today, libraries implement multiple applications. The goal for using these tools is not only connection of staff with users but also communication of users with users, and staff with staff to share information, market library services and make possible communication. Seeing the rapid growth and popularity of social networks in the coming years, it doesn't appear that the concept is going to go away. The evolution of the internet is now forming itself around the characteristics of social networks. The entire internet itself is fast becoming a giant, interactive and powerful social network.

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