

HOW LIBRARIES ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA: NIGERIA PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Social Media (SM) has found application in various organisations and institutions. This research intends to find out how libraries in Nigeria have been using SM. The research employ survey non-purposive sampling techniques by sending the questionnaire link to Nigerian Library Association Facebook page and posting it on NLA online forum email address. Findings reveal that Facebook is the commonest SM platform and visual SM like VIMEO, YouTube, Pinterest and library specific SM like library Thing and Ning are missing. Also most libraries manage only one SM platform and the staff in-charge in most library is computer/system analyst; some librarians experience restriction in using the SM. The number of libraries that are using SM for collaboration is small while the degree of use is good. Recommendations were made at the end of the work on how best libraries should use SM.

Keywords: Social Networking sites, Social Media, SM, Social Media Platforms, Nigerian libraries, Librarians, Library, Social media ambassador

Background to the study

Social Media has become a platform that everybody, organisations and institutions cannot do without Harvard Business Review Analytics Services (2010) and Bullas (2012). The emergence of various platforms has affected virtually every sphere of human endeavour as it revolutionized information communication. The effects of SM have been researched in businesses, showing positive impact also on institutions and professionals showing great influence and increasing reach, socialisation, knowledge, information dissemination etc.

The advent of computer technology in library in the 70's in Nigeria that was greeted with so much reservation had greatly reduced. Technology especially information technology has become part of library routine infrastructures in Nigeria. Singh (2001) and Anyira (2011) the issue of internet has come to stay. One of the off-shoot of internet is web 2.0 which has metamorphosed into Social Networking or Social Media.

Social Media's presence is almost everywhere and the vision of the library within the last few years has been that library services should go to users not necessarily that users should come physically to the library. Social Media is expected to be a veritable tool in achieving this purpose. This research intends to find out how far Nigerian libraries (academic, research/special, government, public and private) have been using SM; with the following specific objectives:

- To determine availability of SM platforms among Nigerian libraries.
- To determine the common SM platforms among Nigerian libraries.
- To determine how many SM platform(s) is/are available among each of the Nigerian libraries.
- To determine the type of access to SM accounts by library staff.
- To determine the status/type of staff that is in-charge library SM.
- Determine the degree of collaboration among Nigerian libraries through SM for information provision.

Technology has been said to revolutionize every aspect of library operations. From the initial time of introducing computers to library to library automation, Information Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries and finally the social networking sites leading to library 2.0 or social library. These SM networking sites have come to stay and they are already having their impact on library operations. The era of printing leaflet and flyers for people to pick, pasting information on the bulletin board as ways of advertising library products and services coupled with the use of fax messages, e-mails, even text messages are receiving additional methods in the systems of communication today which is social networking platforms.

Ayia and Kumah quoting Sadeh (2007) stated that development in web technology are creating more friendly social and fun environments for retrieving and sharing information and of such is social networking sites. Collins and Quan-Hasse (2012) stated that SM has become an increasingly familiar tool employed by academic libraries to market services and resources to current and prospective patrons. There were similar results from a survey of respondents in Asia, North America, and Europe with 71% of academic libraries reporting using social media (Chu and Du, 2013). Anari F. (2013) work showed that many libraries (national, public and academic) in the world are making use of Social Media Technology (SMT) to provide services to visitors and to create an environment of mutual interaction in order to create a platform for sharing views, experiences, ideas and opinions with others.

The emergence and rise in popularity of SM has expanded the possibilities for libraries to market themselves. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) stated that libraries have started to use these tools to interact with their patrons on real time. Lawson (2013) put it this way that our

customers expect us to find them online, tailor our messages to their preferences and be able to engage in dialogue.

Salamon-Cindori (2012) quoting from a work on library journal survey on public library marketing methods and best practices reported that 86% of libraries make use of SM and the top two SM platforms used by libraries are Facebook 99% and Twitter 56%. Many academic and public libraries in the United States have been embracing the use of web 2.0 and Social Networking tools to enhance services to library patrons. Libraries have been progressively implementing a wide variety of these tools but many are concentrating efforts on the use of blogs, open source content management system such as Joomla and Drupal. Social networking sites such as Myspace and Facebook and many others are also using instant messaging, chat services such as Meebo, to answer reference questions. Rogers (2009) also quotes various libraries in the United States using YouTube.

Librarians need to become more media adept Taylor and Francis (2014b), this explains the work of Mishra (2008) on specific web 2.0 tools used in the libraries, Facebook was 71.4%, Flickr 49.6% Blogging 47.7%, Twitter and Meebo 36.1% and YouTube 35.3%. Dickson and Holley (2010) based on a review of the relevant literature; the social networking tools used today for Social networking by academic libraries are the mainstream social networking websites, blogs, Wikis, SM websites and social bookmarking websites.

Taylor and Francis (2014b) from their survey, 70% of libraries are using SM tools and 60% have had a social account for three years or longer. Facebook and Twitter remain the most popular channels currently, but the range of channels being used is expanding rapidly; there is an acceleration of interest in visual channels such as YouTube, Pinterest and Snapchat. This is because what the eye sees is more attractive and is easily convincing.

Kai-Wah Chu and Du (2012) in their work found out that in North America and Europe, 71% were found to be using SM tools with a further 13% saying they planned to use them. Facebook and Twitter were the most commonly used tools. In Francis and Taylor (2014a) international research, the result of 497 responses showed that over 70% of librarians now feel that the use of SM is important, most libraries 68% were managing between one and four SM account. This is because SM has become a popular platform for young people to meet and libraries can also connect effectively with them on SM platforms.

Taylor and Francis (2014b) reported that libraries use SM to fulfil a range of objectives with most focused on promotion, (visibility for and usage of library services and resources). SM is also increasingly being seen as a collection management tool, offering flexible ways to present resources. Outreach is also seen as important- for example helping librarians increase their visibility and connections with the broader library community; it has also found usefulness to librarians by assisting them in the promotion of the work of their faculty.

Libraries have also used SM in the area of marketing and publicity. Hendrix et al (2009) stated that libraries are using Facebook mainly to market the library, push out

announcement to library users, post photos, provide chat reference and have a presence in the social network. In another work by Rogers (2012) on web 2.0 application used by libraries to promote and market services, the librarians response showed that 70.7% use blog, 66.7% use social networking sites, and instant messaging was 50.7% as the most commonly used ones.

All of these functions are not being tied to one particular librarian in all these institutions, there is a need to know the flow of these activities in the library among the librarians. Who is directly in-charge and how do other sections within the library send or receive their own information with users? The white paper of Taylor and Francis (2014b) on use of social media by the library: current practices and future opportunities; further stated that there are some clear differences of opinion across librarians in how much SM can or should be centrally controlled. Some believed that representing the library as a professional function with a consistent tone is the priority, while others believe that a more human approach is important with individual staff free to bring their own ideas and personalities to media activities. This requires more research that will be theoretically based to come to a conclusion.

Taylor and Francis (2014a); it is crucial to note that our upcoming wave of library patrons' students, colleagues and staff – will be from this generation who are technologically sophisticated, well connected on the social web, entrepreneurial and often times impatient. Ferguson (2007) many libraries have seized upon the networking opportunities Myspace affords, building their own profile and connecting with users. He also commented that Facebook users remains mainly college age students making it an ideal interface for college and university libraries looking to connect with their patrons. Social network or social software can be used for providing user centric services in social library environment. Libraries can plan, design and disseminate information to patrons through knowledge management wikis. Marketing of library services can be possible by using social software tools like Podcast, YouTube, Blogger, Second Life, Ning etc- catalogue some of your library books on Library Thing. Start a library podcast and interview students, teachers, patrons and members of the community Mishra (2008). Also he found that 90.4% of librarians' respondents in a survey agreed that web 2.0 tools are important for marketing and promoting library services.

Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) stated that libraries in Nigeria have started to use these tools to be able to keep up with their patrons on real time. These media are used mostly to provide current and up to date information to clients, provide links to other open source library resources, and give information about new arrivals in the case of books through the link of the library world cat and through the updated list of journals. Ezeani and Eke (2011) posited that the most applicable web 2.0 technology for library services is the social networking tools- where librarians can interact with users to study their needs and give a feedback, photo sharing- where archival pictures can be posted to users or uploaded on the library websites.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LIBRARY SOCIAL MEDIA STAFF [AMBASSADOR(S)]

There is the need to look at who is adequate to manage the social media account(s) of the library to ensure that the desired objective of setting it up is achieved. This will lead to what form of training should be designed for the would-be library social media ambassador(s). Adigun, Adegbore and Amuda (2015) work can be summarised as: would-be library social media ambassador(s) must be dedicated staff who is abreast of professional developments of what can be shared with users and colleagues. Also be able to provide an aggregator based on information needs and users' profiles. They further suggested that libraries must create relevant training for professionals and paraprofessionals in the use of social media. Furthermore, the library must create specific social media librarian or social media officer (whom I will refer to as library social media ambassadors) roles to do the dedicated social media-related work.

Other qualities of library social medial ambassadors must be feeling at home with the culture, etiquette and rules of each social media tool Choi (2012). Solomon (2011) suggested that library staff would be the right choice to do social media as they work with their client groups. Barwise and Meehan, (2010) stated that staff that will manage social media must be knowledgeable about the brand and value of the company also the product and/or services of the company. In line with this, Shankman (2010) suggested that social media manager should be customer service people, or frontline staff. In most library settings the customer service people or staff that know about brand and value of the library are principally circulation or reference librarian. Solomon (2011) finally put it that it is about individual libraries evaluating the best person for the job, whether it be IT department, Human Resource, Marketing and Communications, LIS staff or some other combinations.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this work, literature was compared and a questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on a previous work of Olajide and Oyeniran (2014) Knowledge and use of Social Media among Nigerian Librarians. The questionnaire was titled Social Media use in library; it consists of 15 items question. The questionnaire was pretested for face validity among some of the staff of Bowen University library who are not going to take part in the research. Some corrections were made to the initial draft after the face validity test.

The research adopted survey and non-purposeful sampling technique, a method in which the questionnaire was sent out to librarians through the Nigerian Library Association online forum email and the Facebook page between the months of May 2016 and August 2016. A reminder message was sent every month on the online forum and the Facebook to achieve good response. Google form was used to design the questionnaire and the link sent out while the response was collected by Google in an Excel sheet format. The response was later downloaded into excel sheet for analysis and Excel package was used for the analysis and presentation. Table, graph and chart were used in the presentation of results to make it clearer. There is no precise number of libraries in Nigeria, except for the universities which are the academic libraries, that was 121 and the response rate was

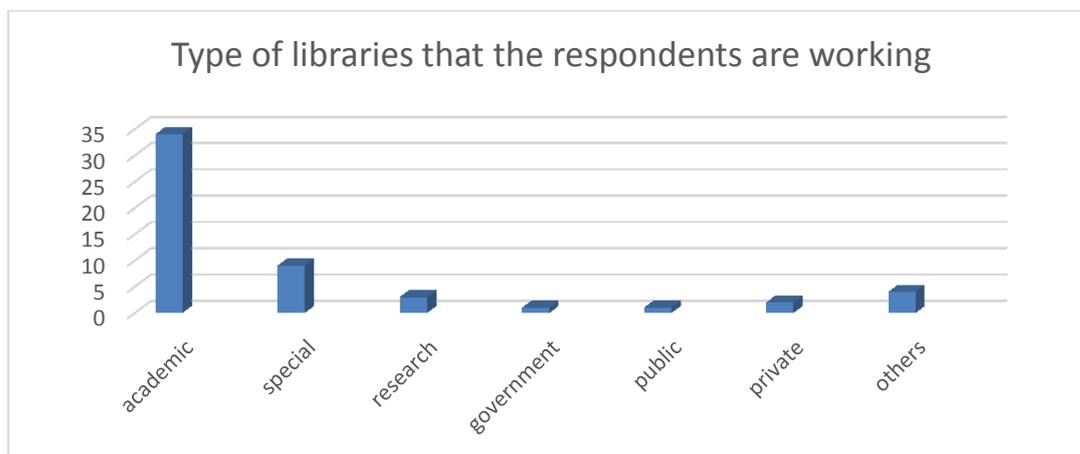
28%, for other libraries the percentage response might be lower than this, but there is no statistical data for how many libraries are functional in Nigeria.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Distribution of respondents by the type of library where they are working

The graph below represents the distribution of type of libraries of respondents.

Graph 1: showing type of libraries that respondents are working.



The graph above shows the distribution of the type of libraries that took part in the research.

It could be deduced that 34 out of the 54 libraries are academic libraries and mainly university libraries with only 2 as Polytechnic libraries while no college of education library responded. Following the academic library is the special library with 9 libraries while the least respondents are government and public libraries with just one respondents and then private library which is 2.

Distribution of Respondents by the section of Library where they are working

The table below represents the sections in which respondents are working.

Table 1: showing various sections of where respondents were working in the library

Section of the library where respondents are working	No of response
computer/digital/system/e-library	13
Circulation	7
Cataloguing	14
Reference	7
Acquisitions	1
collection developments	5
serials or periodicals	4

Administration/Overseeing	2
Public Service	1
Total	54

From the result above 14 Cataloguing and Classification staff responded on behalf of their library followed by 13 computer/digital/system/e-library staff who also responded on behalf of their institutions, while acquisitions and public service staff are the least respondent staff on behalf of their institutions with 1 response each followed by administration/overseeing (library head) with 2 responses.

Objective 1: To determine the availability of SM platforms among Nigerian libraries.

The table below show how many libraries have SM platforms operating in their libraries

Table 2: showing availability of SM platforms in Nigerian libraries.

Availability of SM in the library	Number of response	percentage
Yes	24	44
No	28	52
not sure	2	4
Total	54	100

Out of a total of 54 Nigerian libraries that took part in the survey, it shows that only 44% (24) are having a SM platform while 52% (28) do not have a SM account and 4% (2) reported as not sure.

The percentage of Nigerian libraries without a SM platforms is high and this shows that Nigerian libraries are not current in providing information services to their clients through SM. Majority of the responding institutions were academic libraries and research libraries which require prompt and quality services in diverse format because of the demand of their users and also because of the affiliations and group of users –millennial generations and high literate class of users. 44% is low compared to other advanced nations where libraries have taken their services to SM space. The new library trend that it is not compulsory for users to come to the library before getting library and information services can be achieved through the use of SM platforms which is cheap and easy to maintain Villoldo, et'al (2012), Ojo (2015) and American Library Association report (2013). This corroborate an earlier study that Nigerian librarians are not yet using SM platforms for information service as it is expected Olajide and Oyeniran (2014).

Objective 2: To determine the common SM platforms among Nigerian libraries.

The table below represents the common SM platforms among Nigerian libraries

Table 3: showing the distribution of number of libraries using a particular SM

Type of SM account	No of Libraries using it
Facebook	24
Twitter	5
Google+	6
2go	1
YouTube	1
WhatsApp	2
Skype	3
Yahoo	7
Others	3
Total	52

From the data above, it was discovered that Facebook enjoy the highest patronage among the Nigerian libraries with all the 24 libraries using it, followed by yahoo with 7 libraries and then google+ with 6 libraries. The least patronised SM platforms were 2go and YouTube with just 1 library using them followed by WhatsApp which is used by 2 libraries while Skype and others were being used by 3 libraries.

The usage of SM platforms among libraries follow the pattern of popularity of these SM among the youth in Nigerian as Facebook is the most popular SM platform. This might have been intentional as a way of getting the attention of most users who are adolescents and youth. Following it is yahoo, this might not be unconnected with the fact that yahoo mail is the most popular email platform in Nigerian and the libraries might have been familiar with it through the use of e-mail than other platforms. Twitter also takes a fair position with 5 libraries and as the next most popular SM, some libraries have thought it good to have a share of it as a platform for passing information to their users. YouTube has not been highly used as is the case in some advanced countries libraries because of probably the level of technology among librarians in producing multi-media resources and lack of adequate knowledge on how to use it for providing library services. Skype in an earlier work recorded low usage among Nigerian librarians and it might be due to the fact that Skype is popular for its video calls which some librarians may feel that it will interrupt the library rule of silence everywhere but the enormous value of real-time and deep engagement with users are being missed by Nigerian libraries.

Certain library services like Current Awareness Service (CAS), new display, photo galleries, multimedia information and audio information services are better presented through platforms like Digg, Vimeo, YouTube, etc. Professional library SM platform like Librarything, Ning, etc are also missing among all the libraries.

Objective 3: To determine how many SM platform(s) is/are available among each of the Nigerian libraries.

The table below shows the distribution of how many SM platforms are available in different Nigerian libraries.

Table 4: showing the No of SM platform(s) available among each of the libraries.

No of SM account available in Nigerian libraries	No of Libraries	Percentage of Libraries
1	10	42
2	5	21
3	6	25
4	2	8
5	0	0
6	1	4

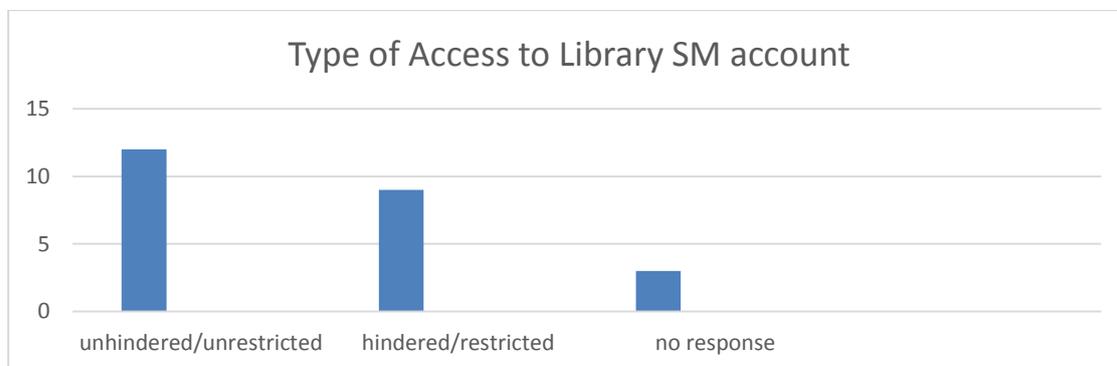
The table showed the number of SM platforms being maintained by each of the libraries. Most Nigerian libraries with 42% of them having just only one platform while another 21% are having 2 SM platforms while 25% of the libraries are having only 3 SM platforms. For 4 SM platforms it is only 8% while no institution has 5 SM platforms and 4% of the libraries have 6 SM platforms. The above can be inferred to mean that Nigerian libraries are not exploring SM enough to provide services.

With diverse SM platforms available one will expect that the libraries as an information institution will do well in catching up with opportunities on information technologies and applications that support and bust their service provision. But this is a clear contrast, Nigerian libraries need to do more in the area of operating on different platforms due to the following reasons: the various platforms are more specifically useful for certain aspect of the library service provision, also because the users are found on different platforms, libraries need to go to where they are to meet them by affording them the opportunity to get to library from any platform they are operating from. The more diverse the platforms available to a library the more media space presence such library will enjoy and the more visible and connected to their present and prospective users they will be. There is the need for Nigerian libraries to do more in operating from different SM platforms.

Objective 4: To determine the type of access

- a) To determine the type of access the librarians have to the SM platforms.

Graph 2: showing the type of Access the librarians have to the Library SM



The above graph showed how the librarians have access to the SM account, out of 24 libraries that reported having an account, only 12 librarians have unhindered access to the library SM while another 9 reported not having access or being hindered in accessing the library SM.

While the library SM platforms may not just be open to all to use or manage but there should be a mechanism that will allow the librarians unhindered access to the SM platforms because one of the quality of information is timeliness, if protocol has to be followed or information has to flow through certain offices, it might have lost its usefulness or relevance if it is delayed than necessary. Nigerian libraries should work on ensuring that information flow out from every section of the library with little or no hindrance so as to achieve the objective of not wasting users' time. With 50% of the libraries not having unhindered access for all the staff shows that information service provision is still with lots of encumbrances and this should be greatly reduced to really fulfil library objective of do not waste the time of users.

b) How does each section have access or obtain information from the SM.

The table below shows a breakdown of how the sections have access to the SM platforms or how they receive information from it

Table 5: Showing how the sections get access to SM platforms or information from it.

Section	No of section with access to SM account (A)	No of section that receives information from the section in-charge (B).	No of section that do not receive information from the section in-charge (C)
Computer/digital/system/e-library	7	1	0
References	2	1	1
Circulation	1	1	0
Administration/Overseeing	0	1	0
Serials or periodicals	2	0	0
Acquisitions	0	0	0
Collection developments	0	1	0
Public services	0	0	0
Cataloguing	0	1	2
Total	12	6	3

There is the need to know which section is actually in-charge if it is not going to be opened to all library staff and this was computed for and it shows that in 7 libraries, the computer/system/digital/e-librarian is the person in charge while reference and periodical/serials are the one in-charge in two other libraries and circulation is in-charge in one institution. Another six respondent indicated that they receive information from the

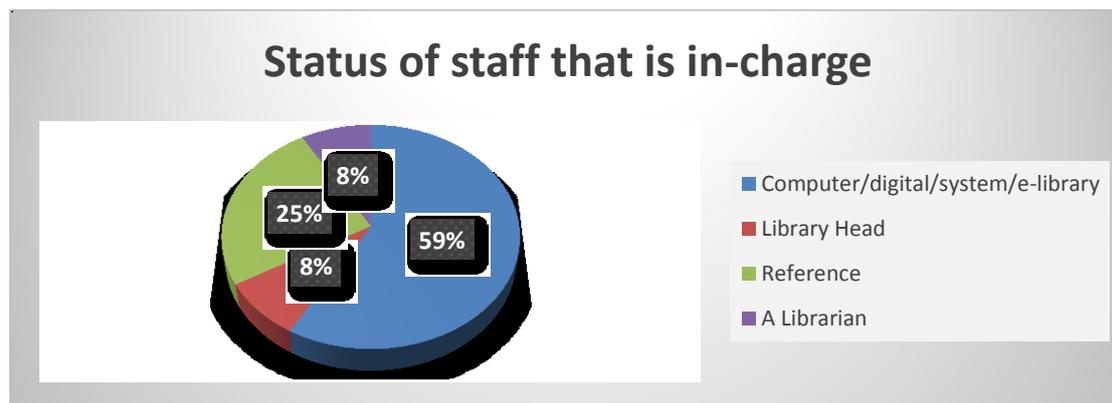
person in-charge when it is an issue that has to do with their section. Another 3 respondents indicated no information get to them from the SM.

Based on the above distribution, 14.3% (3) did not get any information from the SM if this is added to another 12.5% (3) that did not respond on access it means that 6 out of 24 (25%) libraries are not circulating SM information for usage among its sections. This is high if 25% of the libraries will not be using the SM as it is expected for providing services for users or if only some sections of the library will be using the SM while other sections are cut off. This will not give a total library service to the user. Libraries should have a way of providing access or information from SM platforms to every section/unit of the library and at the same time sending or communicating information from every section should be enhanced.

Objective 5: To determine the status of staff that is in-charge.

The distribution of the type of staff/office that is in-charge is presented in the pie chart below.

Chart 1: showing the distribution of the type of staff that is in-charge.



Out of 12 Nigerian libraries that responded to the issue of access as having unhindered access 59% (7) of them are computer/digital/system/e-library, followed by reference with 25% (3) while 8% (1) reported that a librarian is in charge and another 8% indicated that the library head is in-charge.

This trend is not good for an effective library service where the computer/digital/system/e-library person who may not always be on seat because he/she provides technical support to every other sections of the library or who on most cases are not trained librarians in the Nigerian case. The SM supposed to be attached to the office of the reference librarian or the circulation librarian who are the ambassadors of the library in terms of relation with users for service provision. Most of the request that may be coming from users that demand urgency or timeliness can best be addressed by either of this set of offices. They are also the custodian of information products owned by the library and are usually well versed about library routine operation which the SM platform should address. By giving it to the office of computer/system/digital/ e-library will not

bring out the best for the library as it means that all information will have to be recirculated before the people in charge can actually attend to the request.

Objective 6: To determine the degree of how libraries are using SM for collaboration.

Chart 2: showing the degree of collaboration among libraries through SM



The degree of collaboration is as presented above; but out of 24 libraries using SM only 41.7% (10) of them were using SM for collaboration while the remaining 58.3% (14) are not using SM platforms for collaboration with other libraries. The degree of collaboration showed that 10% (1) of the 10 libraries rated as excellent and 60% (6) as very good while 20% (2) and 10% (1) are good and fair respectively.

The number of libraries using SM for collaboration is very small, this issue should be addressed as SM provides a cheap and real-time conversation with users and certain library services and products can be exchange through SM. It has been proved that knowledge sharing is possible through SM. Though among the libraries that are using SM for collaboration, the level of the degree is very good and this should be kept and improved upon as the 20% good and 10% fair can be improved upon for better performance.

RECOMMENDATION

The following are some of the recommendations suggested:

- Libraries need to embrace the use of SM in this 21st century as it is now the largest gathering of users. Any institution that will be relevant and visible enough must embrace SM.
- Libraries should do more in the area of available platforms, libraries should ensure that they move with the trend of information dissemination pathways in this 21st century so as to remain relevant
- As more SM platforms owned by a library may afford it the opportunity of using the most appropriate for each of the library services/products rendered and at the same time increase the social media space presence which invariably allow their users to connect with them from different places.

- Use of SM for collaboration among libraries should be improved, more libraries should embrace SM for collaboration. This can greatly improve library services as it allows for real-time deep engagement among collaborating libraries. In the face of budget cut to the library, SM can come to the rescue of library in terms of communication, relationship, exchange of information products and services etc.
- The office or staff that should be in-charge of SM should be the Circulation or Reference librarians, who are the “Ambassadors” of the library and who are in position to attend to users’ request promptly because of the quality of training, accessibility to information products and responsibilities attached to the office. Also specially trained librarian(s) or information technology staff can be employed to perform this function (of managing the library SM) depending on the size of the library.
- Alternatively, each section of the library may choose a particular social media that is most suitable to them for reaching their audience based on the services of the library section and features of such social media. They can now appoint someone within the section to respond to the users.
- Again the library can have a way of bringing all the social media platform together in the way that the library social media ambassador will have access to them and at the same time if need to be having in-house mechanism of relating with every section on social media so as to respond to user’s interaction as quickly as possible.
- The library should have a mechanism in place that will allow all librarians to have access to the library SM without restrictions as information should be disseminated on time to users. Otherwise there should be a way by which information for every section gets to them on time and responses also placed on the SM.
- Further research can be carried out on the type of collaboration that libraries are using SM for. Also the qualification of digital/system staff can also be determined and whether they actually provide library services to requests from the users.

CONCLUSION

SM has come to stay and as a platform for information and knowledge dissemination and sharing, library as an information and knowledge service provider needs to do all that is possible to operate and maximise the benefits of SM for an enhanced library service provision to her users. The libraries of 21st century cannot be passive but join the train of SM to be able to fulfil their missions and objectives. Libraries will perform better by operating as many as possible SM platform for greater accessibility to users and visibility on the Media Space as this will enable libraries to serve their users more timely and remotely at a reduced cost. Also libraries should reduce internal barriers among the librarians in using the SM by allowing all the sections access to the SM account and at the same time send their own contribution and/or response(s) to users’ needs that concerns the section. Most SM platform allows for contribution which will not be available to the outsiders until the library ambassador or the staff in-charge approves such.

Collaboration should be explored more by other libraries which have not been doing it as this research showed how libraries that are collaborating are finding it a very good platform. Circulation or Reference librarian is advised to be in-charge of SM as they can

be referred to as library ambassadors. The nature of their responsibilities and the office(s) make them more suitable by the fact that they have access to most information resources in the library also they are the librarians that are more close to users.

Libraries need to operate more library specific SM platforms like Library thing, Ning, etc. Also there is the need for libraries to have more account on multimedia based platforms as most of the libraries are not having account on them. Multimedia has greater effect of attraction for users and at the same time helps them to retain more.

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