

SOCIAL MEDIA AND LIBRARIES: A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP FOR 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIANSHIP

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Abstract

The present paper presents the symbiotic relationship between the libraries and social media for the creation of digital environment in the LIS domain. It is noted that 21st century librarianship witnesses huge changes in the field of Library and Information science. As a result of which many changes in the LIS domain have altered the forms of information and nature of services but the basic role of the libraries - to cater the information according to need and demand of the users- is the same. Digital library along with the internet helps the library users to access their necessary resources without physically visiting the library. So it is the high time for the library professionals to think the alternate ways to attract the users and to meet their need and demand. As the popularity of social media are growing exponentially, library professionals cannot keep themselves aside without exploiting the social media. By using social media libraries can attract their users and enable them to participate in the production of library products and services. By posting library material, library news, etc via social media on library page, library authority helps their users to inform the library related matter at any time by the variety of locations on the Web. So many libraries in India and abroad are providing facility to use social media for their users through library's website. The paper discusses how the social media can be exploited for the benefit of the users of library. It presents the name of libraries which uses social media in their libraries. At the end some suggestions are enumerated for the benefit of the library professional before choosing the social media in the library.

KEYWORDS: - Face Book, Twitter, Library, Social Networking, Reference Service, YouTube, Flickr, Blog.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century **Social media**¹, a computer based collection of tools, is a platform where people can build social relations among people who share their interests, activities, personal matters, etc. They share their information in different forms, namely text, photos, audio, video, etc. In other words, Social media are a collective term for the online tools and services such as blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo and video sharing communities, social bookmarking, podcasts, discussion forums, RSS feeds, virtual

worlds, presentation sharing and a lot more. Over two hundred social networking sites are now available in the world. Due to the popularity of social media, library professional cannot keep themselves aside from the use of social media in the LIS domain. It is a great challenge for the librarian to capture the attention of the remote users who are using social media like Social news (Dig, Propeller), Social Bookmarking (Del.icio.us, Blink list), Social Networking (Face book, MySpace, LinkedIn), Social Photo and Video Sharing (YouTube, Flickr) and Wikis (See Table One) and who are reluctant to visit the library physically. So many libraries of India and around the world are giving facility to their users to use social media through library's website. By exploiting Social media the library can give extra facility to reach their services to their web users, and offer them to communicate with the library. It is found that there are nearly million of active Face book users, over millions of LinkedIn members, billion+ of images on Flickr, millions of pages on Wikipedia. So many libraries use Wikis, Flickr, or Blogs for publication of historical photos and identification of notable people, places, or events picture. Some libraries use Wikis for content creation and building a collaborative relation between library and the users whereas other libraries also use it for marketing purpose.

**TABLE ONE:-
DATE OF LAUNCHING OF VARIOUS SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA**

YEAR OF LAUNCHING	NAME OF SOCIAL NETWORKING MEDIA
1995	Wiki
1997	Weblogs
1999	MSN messenger
2003	LinkedIn, MySpace, Delicious
2004	Flickr, Face book (not open to all)
2005	YouTube, Windows Live Messenger(re launch of MSN messenger)
2006	Twitter, Face book (open to all) slide share

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORK:-

- To be informed about the different social media.
- To know the benefits and purpose of using the social media in a library.
- To know the risks and challenges from Social media.
- To know the characteristics of social media.
- To know the application of social media to the library.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA:-

- Users directly communicate with the content and its creators by exchanging information in a twinkle of an eye.
- Web users can perform any applications directly from browsers and can control data as he or she wishes on the social media platform.
- Web users can do more than just to access information.

- It is simple and easy to use for web user. So web users do not need to acquire any knowledge for using this media.
- Social media are not centralized due to lack of any control under conventional media systems.

BENEFITS OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES:-

- It helps libraries to get closer to the users and build a collaborative platform for the users. Social media are a great way to attract the attention of new users for marketing of library resources and services. Thus Social media creates potential users of the library.
- Registration is very easy for any user. It allows users to update their profile via their mobile phone through text messaging and apps downloaded for certain smart phones and tablets. User can create as many accounts as he wishes to create in different social media.
- Users are able to get answers to specific questions by using social media. It is also helpful to elicit ideas and suggestions. Thus it enhances reference service.
- Library authority can encourage programs and events by rating, reviewing, and sharing with their friends and neighbours. This new method has applied for Amazon and the same may be applied for libraries.
- Through the use of social media, the messages can be sent to others persons or users so that the message can be viewed easily. This is a great attempt for advocating the concept of reading lists generated by librarians, and in some cases user generated reading list which is more beneficial than librarians.
- Social media helps students in choosing library resources and making it easy for them to add content to the library's website.
- It is not highly expensive. User can afford benefit of social media by paying phone service provider fees.
- Users are willing to use Social Media in libraries and they showed their urge towards the benefits of social media in library resources and services.

PURPOSE OF USING THE SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES:-

- To attract potential users of the library by making announcements, providing reference service, networking with other libraries, promoting general library services, providing quick updates to users and their query and to develop communities.
- To cater information about latest arrivals and news about the library to encourage discussions among users about new arrivals to build discussion groups.
- Users are to be given links to recommended Internet Resources, Book reviews, latest arrivals, etc.
- To communicate among the librarians about their professional development.
- To build an e-reputation of LIS domain.
- To modernize the library & information centre.

- To place a platform for users to discuss among the users and staffs about the services of the library and their grievances.
- To provide entertainment or amusement for users.

According to global survey made by Taylor **and Francis**² on current practices of social media by libraries, the top three purposes (See Table Two) of using the social media in libraries are to--

- Promote events regarding library.
- Provide library resources and collections.
- Provide library services.

**TABLE TWO:-
PURPOSE OF USING THE DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES**

PURPOSES	FACE BOOK	INSTANT MESSAGING	LINKED IN	TWITTER	BLOGS	FLICKR	WIKIS	YOUTUBE
INFORMATION SHARING	Y			Y		Y	Y	Y
A/V MATERIALS								Y
CIRCULATIONS				Y	Y			
COMMUNICATIONS	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
USER SERVICES	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
PUBLIC RELATION	Y			Y				
REFERENCE SERVICE	Y	Y		Y	Y			
USER EDUCATION	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y
CATALOGUING SERVICE FOR STAFF					Y			
IT SERVICE FOR STAFF					Y	Y	Y	
LIBRARY NOTICES					Y			
STAFF COMMUNICATION	Y	Y						
CONNECTION WITH OTHER LIBRARIANS			Y					
ONLINE HELP SERVICE		Y		Y				
INFORMATION SERVICE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
VIDEO SHARING						Y		Y
LIBRARY MARKETING	Y			Y				
NEWS DISSEMINATION	Y			Y				
LATEST ARRIVALS					Y			
STUDENT INTERACTION	Y				Y			
ONLINE REFERENCE SERVICE		Y						
CONNECTION WITH								

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED BEFORE CHOOSING A SOCIAL MEDIA IN A LIBRARY

According to Tyler³ in 2011, if a library takes decision of using a social media application, the following factors are to be considered before selecting any social media for a library---

- I. The website of library's presence may be in a blog or face book or Flickr or whatever may be.
- II. How the accepted site or tool will be utilized by the library.

- III. The target users of the library.
- IV. How the library will evaluate its presence.
- V. Implications of resources
- VI. Management of potential risks
- VII. How the chosen social site or tool is compatible with library service and marketing plans

RISKS AND CHALLENGES FACED WHILE USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES:-

FROM THE USERS' POINT OF VIEW:-

- Power cut is the greatest problem while using social media in library.
- Most of the users are not acquainted with the usage of social media.
- Users think about privacy and theft of identity at the time of using social media.
- Many social media tools are available in the library website as a result of which users are unable to choose the right things at the right time.
- Users are reluctant to be trained by the library authority.
- Users are reluctant to use social media because of slow internet speed.

FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF LIBRARY

- Due to lack of sufficient fund, it is not possible for Library authorities to host a website and use social media in their website.
- Library authorities are confused to choose the right social media for their particular library.
- Library staffs are not properly trained in using the social media.
- It is not always possible for the library authorities to train the users and the staff.
- Due to lack of interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media, library authorities cannot exploit it properly.
- Librarians have to face challenges due to authentication of users, decisions about whose rules or laws prevail, organizational politics, along with computer and network security; particularly in the increasingly wireless age. Any user posts negative comments from his or her perspectives about the library service or resources. It may damage the reputation of library.
- The site may be attacked by virus at any time in any way. It opens up the possibility for hackers to commit nuisance and launch spam.
- Library authorities are not in a position to choose the right social media at the right library for the right user as there are numerous social networking sites are available.

APPLICATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES

CONTENT COMMUNITIES

Library encourages to share on some particular kind of content. They differ according to the type of content (text, photos, videos, power point presentations, etc.) they share. Some

of them have earned a great popularity as it is capable of content organization and sharing. As for example,

- Text Sharing—Book Crossing.
- Photo Sharing—Flickr, Picasa, Photo Bucker.
- Video Sharing—YouTube, Daily Motion, Metcafe.
- Presentation Sharing—Slide Share, Prezi, Scribd.

SOCIAL NETWORKING:-

MySpace: - Here library users can use html to customize their profile and they can add new graphics and videos on it.

Face book: -With the help of Face book, library users can be informed with different upcoming events and share the information about their new arrivals and editions of books. Face book mainly helps in marketing of services and products. Photo can be tagged through the use of it. Ask-A –Librarian service can be exploited by using it.

Twitter: - Twitter is a free social networking used to send and read messages known as tweets. At present librarians share all kinds of news regarding library through the use of twitter. Librarians can highlight new materials, new groups, meetings and more with some of these suggestions through twitter.

LinkedIn: - It is a professional networking site. It can be used by the librarians to create professional connections and to market library services among other library professionals spread all over the world and can also share their ideas and professional experiences.

WEB 2.0:-

The term was coined by Darcy DiNuccie in 1999 and the term was popularized by **Tim O'Reilly**⁴. The term includes weblogs, wikis and syndications. It is nearly synonymous with social media.

Blog: - Libraries can use Blogs to keep their users aware with the latest developments in the field of library related matter. Blogs can be subscribed through RSS feeds. Blogger and Word Press are the examples of blog. In addition to this blog can be used as follows—

- Notice Board
- Latest arrival
- Current Awareness Service
- User Orientation Programme can be uploaded

Wikis: - The most recognized wiki is Wikipedia. A few other wiki services are wikia, wiki how, wiki dot, Wikimedia, wiki news, PB works. Wikis can be used for---

- Collaborative work
- Publication of historical photos and information
- Building relation between librarian and user

Ajax: - Ajax, part of web 2.0, is one tool of choice for creating interactive pages with easily changeable components. In libraries web pages can update frequently with new messages with help of Ajax without reloading the entire browser page.

Mashups:-It is hybrid of different social media. The users are allowed to edit OPAC data and metadata and create a user driven catalogue.

IM (Instant Messaging):-

Users can chat with the librarian through *IM*, an online communication service which is used for reference service and voice chat. Here co-browsing, file sharing, screen capturing and data sharing; etc. are also possible. It is generally communicated through SMS via mobile phone.

YOUTUBE: -

Libraries can also advocate their different programs, conferences, workshops, seminars, Virtual conferences by uploading their videos on the YouTube.

FLICKR: -

It is an online image sharing service. Sharing and uploading picture of library events and services are possible for libraries by using Flickr.

RSS –

RSS, a collection of web feed formats for publishing frequently updated works, became popular as web users need not to browse frequently the new entry in their preferred website. Feed reader or feed aggregator is needed to read RSS feed. The popular feed readers are blog lines, Google reader, feed demon, etc. In the domain of LIS, RSS may be used for—

- Marketing the library services among distance learner.
- Dissemination of updated news to the web user
- Selective Dissemination Of Information
- Sending News to the users according to their area of interest
- Library news, events, orientation, etc.

SOCIAL BOOKMARKING AND TAGGING: -

Social bookmarking (see Table Three) is a method for the users of internet to store, organize, search the bookmarks of the web pages on the net with the help of user-driven

metadata popularly known as **tagging**⁵. Libraries can use social bookmarking web sites to tag and develop online catalog of library resources. Delicious is an online social bookmarking service which store and share the large number of web bookmarks. Other notable bookmarking services are CiteUlike, Diigo, Google Reader, folkd, etc.

LIBRARIAN 2.0:-

In September 2005, Michale Carey used the term “**Library 2.0**”⁶ in his personal blog Library Crunch . When “Web 2.0” is combined with library services, it is renamed as “Lib 2.0” where web users can create the content and services they view within the library's web-presence, OPAC, etc.

VODCASTING:-

Vodcasting is a series of digital media files which delivers videos according to the demand of web users and needs high speed internet connectivity. Library can be utilized it for—

- Uploading the database of issue-return of documents
- Giving guidelines on the use of library catalogue, library premises, etc.

PODCASTING:-

Podcasting⁷ provides the end user to play the recorded intellectual output online without any additional software and also to download for future use. It may be utilized for—

- Story hours for children library
- User orientation programme
- Marketing of library services
- Music and audio book collections
- Providing library staff details on podcasting with their job profile

TABLE:-THREE

LIBRARIES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

NAME OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA	SOCIAL MEDIA USED BY THE FOLLOWING LIBRARIES	URL

WIKIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Queens University Library ❖ National Archives Of United Kingdom ❖ McMaster University Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://library.queensu.ca/wiki/elearning/doku.php ❖ http://yourarchives.nationalarchives.gov.uk ❖ http://libwiki.mcmasrer.ca/fye/
SOCIAL BOOKMARKING:- DELICIOUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Holdredge Area Public Library uses Delicious to keep and organize important Internet Links. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://www.delicious.com//HoldregeLibrary
FLICKR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Library of congress uses historical photos on Flickr. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://www.flickr.com/photos/Library_of_Congress
YOUTUBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Brown Library—video tutorial on finding books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://www.youtube.com/watch
SLIDESHARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Scottish Library and Information Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://www.slideshare.net/scottishlibraries
BLOG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Brooklyn Public Library is using Blog for fund raising through text messaging ❖ Library of Congress are using a number of blogs to cater different communities ❖ Santa Fe Public Library ❖ Kendriya Vidyalaya Pattom Library, Kerala ❖ National library of Australia has used the social media to support every member of the staff to have the facility to communicate online via social media, professional networking sites, blogs and personal web sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://blogs.loc.gov/ ❖ http://santsfelibrary.blogspot.in/ ❖ http://librarykvpattam.wordpress.com/
MYSFACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Bryant University Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://www.myspace.com/bryantuniversitylibrary
RSS FEEDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Massachusetts Institute of Technology Libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://libraries.mit.edu/help/rss/barton/

FACEBOOK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Geek The Library ❖ British Library ❖ University of Delaware Library 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://www.facebook.com/britishlibrary ❖ http://www.facebook.com/UDLibrary
TWITTER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Globallib for sharing global and international library information for librarians around the world ❖ Alalibraryval for library reference specialist at American Library Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ http://twitter.com/alalibrary ❖ http://twitter.com/globallib

ROLE OF LIBRARIAN WHILE USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES

Due to advent of internet, the librarian of the 21st century, popularly known as “Librarian 2.0”, can understand the web users deeply in terms of their goals and aspirations, workflows, social and content needs, and more. Librarian 2.0 is where the user is, when the user is there. For the utilization of social media, a librarian—

- Adopts the new communication mode of choice - telephone, Skype, IM, SMS, texting, email, virtual reference, etc.
- Cannot avoid traditional cataloging and classification and chooses tagging, folksonomies, and user-driven content descriptions to inform the web users about OPAC as and when necessary.
- Combines e-resources and print formats.
- Connects people with web technology in the LIS domain.
- Connects the web users with subject expert for discussions, conversations
- Uses the latest tools of communication for sharing of information.
- Uses and caters everything from laptops to PDAs to iPods.
- Develops targeted federated search and adopts the open URL standard.
- Embraces non-textual information and graphics, moving images, audio, and video.
- Encourages user driven metadata and user developed content and commentary.
- Learns the power of the Web 2.0 opportunities.
- Plays an active role in online communication by optimizing the available resources from social media.
- Understands the potential in using content sources like the Open Content Alliance, Google Print, and Open World Cat.

Social media are dynamic and can change rapidly as the technology is changing faster. However in near future librarian may have to track how the web users use library profiles or how their users access the library catalog or do something else that librarian cannot anticipate presently. So the librarian needs to change their role accordingly in the hi-tech digital environment of 21st century to continue to deliver their services for the web users.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of social media study the following recommendations are proposed:-

- High speed internet connectivity must be provided in the library campus so that all users can utilize the benefit of the social media. For the getting benefit of vodcasting the connectivity is needed.
- All libraries should develop their own website so that they can build their own social media plan and social media services.
- Among the social media, Face book is much more popular so it is recommended that libraries should develop their own Face book page on their websites to attract the teenager.
- Librarians should not only be aware about the social media but they must be well trained and informed in using social media for marketing library resources and services. Librarian should adopt e learning and distance education programmes offered by eminent institutions and organizations.
- Seminar, workshop, etc must be organized by the professional institutions so that the librarians may be well enriched and they can cultivate their knowledge.
- Library associations, alumnae and LIS schools should utilize social media to popularize the use of social media among LIS professionals and enhance the professional image.
- Universities and Library schools should frame their syllabus keeping in mind of the use of social media for this purpose. If the library professionals want to exploit the information social media could be taken up by Library and Information Studies curriculum. (Palmateer, 2007)⁸
- Research should be conducted to investigate the use of different social media among students and general public and how they can be properly utilized by library. (Sanchez, 2008)⁹
- Library authority does not want to disclose their personal information to unknown users as all users are not known to them. Library authorities hesitate to use it due to confidentiality and security of information. Any user may posts objectionable, illicit, offensive material in the site. The authenticity of the user's comment is not always trustworthy. So the library authority should be careful about the security and authenticity of information.
- Librarians should also work through the social media process of solving problems and making decisions with the objective of helping all library users develop their sense of ethics and then to translate this reflection into action.

CONCLUSION

A symbiotic relationship between the libraries and social media are needed to present together best of the physical and digital environment to create learning hubs. Symbiotic relationship is a close relationship between two species –library and social media. This relationship is essential. Sometimes it is harmful and sometimes it is beneficial. But the library and social media create a balance for hi-tech digital environment. In the present century social media is a great advantage with enormous tools for libraries to cater their information in a sophisticated manner. Due to the popularity of the internet, users and the

librarians want to use the social media for their need. Social media can help the libraries to promote their services, resources, events and communication to their users. In conclusion it may be said that according to the digital needs of library users, libraries need to be changed accordingly. Internet service should be introduced in the library to develop web page and social media page. Due to increasing popularity of social media in India and abroad, librarians should be properly trained in this regard so that all the problems can be resolved. But it is not an easy matter to select the appropriate social media for library because different social media have different facilities and different appeal to web users. Moreover this service may be called an extension service of libraries which reminds the fourth law of Library Science—save the time of the user as well as of the staff enunciated by Ranganathan, S.R. Therefore by utilizing the social media, librarians and libraries may extend their services for web users who are unable and reluctant to visit the library physically. At present it is observed that the printed documents play a crucial role but the social media offer an additional pathway to content acquisitions. In a nutshell it may be stated that both of them are supplement and complement to each other.

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