# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING IN LIBRARY SERVICES

By

Olaniyi Esther Temitope

olaniyitope91@yahoo.com

College Library

Emmanuel Alayande College Of Education, Oyo

### Abstract

Social media has got a great potential in the present web world. It is a very effective tool for sharing and communicating the information. Libraries cannot ignore the potential of this great tool to communicate ideas, opinions, resources and news. Social media helps the library users to access library resources without physically visiting the library. The purpose of this paper is to explore how libraries are using Social Media applications for marketing library services. The paper discusses the concept of social media, historical background of social media, social media platforms, social media marketing, significance of using social media in libraries and the purpose of using social media in libraries. Conclusion and recommendations were made. It was recommended among other things that high speed internet connectivity must be provided in the library so that users can utilize the benefits of the social media and librarians should not only be aware of the social media but they must be well trained and informed in using social media for marketing library resources and services.

Key words: Social media, Marketing and Library services.

### Introduction

In the 21st century, social media, a computer based collection of tools, is a platform where libraries can build social relations among users who share their interests, activities, personal matters, etc. Libraries share their information in different forms, such as text, photos, audio, video, etc. In other works, 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 fe &s, virtual worlds, presentation sharing and a lot more. Chakrabarti (2016), assert that over twohundred social networking sites are now available in the world. Owing to the popularity of social media, library professionals cannot keep themselves aside from the use of social media. It is a great challenge for the librarian to capture the attention of the remote users who are using social media and who are reluctant to visit the library physically.

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. The objective of social media and marketing in the library is to build relationships and increase patronage among the library patrons (Chakabarti, 2016). The library needs to consider the following before choosing a social media suitable for the library website of library presence, acceptability, the target user, evaluation of the social media, implications of resources and the compatibility with the library services and market plan

# The Concept of Social Media

There are different definitions of social media by different authors. Merriam Webster Dictionary (2021) defines social media as forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content such as video. To Hudson (2020), social media refer to websites and applications that are designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently and in real-time. According to Bradley (2012), the term social media refer to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into an interactive dialogue. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) described social media as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. Solis (2010) also defines social media as the democratisation of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people and peers. Based on the above definitions and the author's own understanding, social media can be described as a group of web-based and mobile applications that allow users to share and create knowledge in a real time social interaction. It is user-centric, multi-purpose and it is not time and location bound. Social media consists of various user-driven marketing channels, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Blogss, YouTube, Flickr etc and, it has a number of benefits over traditional marketing.

## Historical Background of Social Media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that the era of social media began in the late 1970s when Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis founded Usenet. Usenet made it possible for internet users to post public messages worldwide. According to Bennett (2013), Usenet, AOL, CompuServe and BBS created the basis for Web 2.0 and Google. The term Web 2.0 was founded in 2004 to describe the new way of using World Wide Web. It means that the content and applications were no longer created by individuals, instead, they were modified by all users collaboratively; Web 2.0 made users its codevelopers. For example Wikipedia has made it possible for users to create new content and modify what has already been published (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, Bennett 2013) Although there have been various social networking platforms before the development of mobile technology, this can be seen as one of the key drives in the growth path of social media. Smart phones have enabled people to be online all the time and be in interaction with others through various social media sites.

Jain (2013) also asserted that in the beginning days, social media was limited to fundamental tools and websites used mainly by professors of technology and computer geeks. Over a period of time, social media changed into a behemoth that is changing the way people connect and converse with corporations, governments, traditional media, and each other. The monopoly of the message held by the traditional media lost its reins with the advent of social media due to the domineering facts of social media over the traditional media. In case of the traditional media, the communication was merely monologue or, at the most a restricted two-way tête-à-tête. Without using any interactive means, through the traditional media, the individuals used to share information or ideas about an organisation. Such a communication was established mainly through one-to-one communication either in person or on the phone; either through the mail or via e-mail. With the progression of time from mid to late 90s, the conventional and traditional media started getting replaced by the social media. Various forms of social media like Internet forums, personal websites, advanced bulletin board systems and online chat ensured that the individual's voice reached to the mass audience. Many libraries still housed in monologue mode but started reckoning the need to adapt the new media in general and social media, specifically.

Today, social media has rapidly turned to be the way of how people communicate with each other. Over the past one decade, it has transformed the way people and organisations communicate. This has become a reality with the ubiquitous spreading of broadband internet in every nook and corner of the societies. The multimedia compatibility of the social media like easy uploading of audio-video content, text and images, another dimension of immediate global access has been added to the social media, thereby causing a great threat to the prevailing traditional and conventional media. Social media paved a way for every individual and library to become a publisher of his ideas and views (Jain, 2013).

# Applications of Social Media Platforms and marketing in Libraries

There are several social media platforms. The time spent on a certain social media platform depends on the demographic group. Ebrand (2015) reports that, the most popular social media platforms among young people are YouTube, Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. Comparing the most popular social media sites of the 13 to 17 and 18 to 29 year old people, which majority users of 1 ibrary belongs to, it can be noticed that at the moment younger people prefer various messaging applications such as WhatsApp, Messenger, Kik messenger and Snapchat over Pinterst, Twitter or Link dln (WeAre Social 2015)

Social media marketing is a form of Internet marketing and refers to the process of achieving marketing communication and branding goals through social media sites. Social media marketing includes activities such as sharing content, videos and images. The aim is to create content that attracts attention and encourages the reader to share it with others through social media platforms. (Kaillo, 2015). Social media marketing is usually based on a library's social media strategy, it is important to have a communication strategy for each social media tool that the library uses. It is vital to be active, interesting, humble, less formal and honest. Being present is not enough, instead the library must figure out how to attract readers and how to communicate with users. It is important to think beforehand what the library wants to achieve and what kind of a message to send out to users. In addition, each social media network has a different purpose and target group and therefore it is vital to choose the right tools. Library must think globally but act locally because the cultures and the information needs of the users are different. Social media platforms gives the library a new look. Social media encouraged the library professional to provide information and communicate with library users. The most commonly used social media in the library are:

Facebook: Facebook was founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hugher and Eduardo Saverin. In only two years Facebook grew from college's networking site to a worldwide platform where users can communicate with each other (Facebook 2015). For libraries Facebook provides a platform where to target new and existing users, and to create a two-way conversation with them. Facebook provides the best tools to target the right user segment. Through Facebook, libraries can increase awareness by creating their own profile where information can be shared. (Castronovo & Huang 2012). With the help of Facebook, library users can be informed with different upcoming events and share the information about their new arrivals and editions of books. Facebook mainly helps in marketing of library services. Photo can be tagged through the use of it. Ask-A—Librarian service can also be exploited by using it.

Instagram: Instagram was acquired by Facebook in 2012. With over 300 million users, Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms (About Instagram 2015). Instagram is a free application for both users and libraries. Through Instagram, libraries can share information

Chakrabarti (2016) asserts that libraries and librarians are now using social media platforms to connect with users in a range of exciting and innovating ways. Instagram allows users to take photograph on their smartphones, apply exciting filters and add hashtags, and then share these images online with their followers, with photos of the latest books to borrow, snaps of library visitors attending workshops and shots of behind the scenes activities, instagram is fast becoming an exciting platform through which libraries and librarians can share news, achievement and images of everyday life among the bookshelves and with the majority of users. In key undergraduate age brackets it certainly makes sense for libraries to consider instagram's merits. Libraries can use instagram to ask users about their favourite authors, to show off their surroundings and collections, to publicise event, to show what goes on behind the scenes and to show their history (Chakrabarti, 2016).

Pinterest: Pinterest was founded in 2010 by Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra and Evan Sharp. According to the latest statistics Pinterest has over 72 million users and 85 % of them are female (About pinterest, 2015). Pinterest is a visual and social bookmarking site. Registered libraries and users can upload and share media content such as images and videos with others. Instead of pressing like –button, users pin things to save them on their personalised boards. These are called pinboards. The aim of Pinterest is to help users to discover things they want to plan, do or buy. Pinterest connects people through their interests, hobbies and passions. For libraries, it provides a tool where they can share their resources and services with clienteles. This is a place for libraries to collaborate on ideas and information.

YouTube: YouTube is a video-sharing website which was founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim. One year later Google acquired it. YouTube has over one billion users and is the second most searched site after Google (Chakrabarti, 2016). YouTube is a forum where people connect, inform and inspire others. Youtube provides a platform for library to advertise and share video content with users. Libraries can also advocate their different programmes, conferences, workshops, seminars, virtual conferences by uploading their videos on the YouTube. It was observed that in the 21st century, people show much interest in audiovisuals than in printing materials. At the turn of this era, videos became popular as students started spending more time with audiovisuals.

Twitter: Twitter is a free microblogging site, where the users can send and read short messages also known as tweets. It was founded in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Evan Williams and Biz Stone. The difference to other social networking sites is that the messages are limited to 140 characters. Users can participate in the conversation through retweeting and using certain hashtags (About Twitter, 2019). Twitter is a great place to build relationships with library and library users.

Library can either buy advertisement space or create their Twitter account where they can share information, services and express their opinions with the users.

Carscaddon and Chapman (2013), opine that libraries are using Twitter for a variety of communication purposes. Some libraries use it to listen to what their users are saying about the library. Twitter is a golden opportunity to connect with members of the library community (Bell, 2012). Some libraries use Twitter to make connections to users and organisations within their communities to build community online (Gunton & Davis, 2012). Some libraries use Twitter to promote services Twitter can be an excellent way to learn what clients are thinking, to build conversations with users, to address users queries, and to advocate for programmes and services. 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.

LinkedIn: This is a professional networking site. LinkedIn differs from other social networking sites due to its purpose. LinkedIn is the largest professional networking site with over 300 million users. It was founded in 2002 by Reid Hoffman. The aim of LinkedIn is to help professionals to network with each other and at the same time make them more successful and productive. When joining LinkedIn the member will create a professional profile that includes information such as job experience, educational background, personal information and interests. The same applies for libraries except that the outlook of the profile is slightly different (About LinkedIn, 2015). 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

Podcasting: Ezeani & Igwesi (2012), assert that podcasting provides the end users the opportunity 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 in public library, user orientation programme in academic library, marketing of library services, music and audio book collections for people with special needs and providing library staff details on podcasting with their job profile.

Library Thing: Is a tool that enriches the library Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). Once an account is created, a list of books with ISBNs is sent to Library Thing which sends back a piece of code which is pasted into the footer of the Library Online Public Access Catalogue. Librarians can utilize this to send a list of current publications to users this serves as current awareness service (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012).

Blogs: Weblogs or blogs has got a great potential in the present web world. Blogs can be

subscribed through RSS feeds. It is a very effective synchronous tool for sharing and communicating information. Libraries in the 21st century cannot ignore the potential of this great tool to communicate ideas, opinions, resources and news. Blogging could be an efficient and effective alternative for information and knowledge transfer, resulting in a more productive workforce in libraries. Blog culture may affect every aspect and services of library phenomenon from collection development to reference services; Current awareness services, as a marketing tool of library services, as library newsletter, as a communication channel among the library staff as well as among the user community (Aqil & Siddique, 2010). Libraries can use Blogs to keep their users aware with the latest developments in the field of library related matters.

In addition to this, blog can be used for notice board, create new arrival, current awareness service and user orientation programme can be uploaded. The objective of a blog is to build relationships and increase patronage among the library patrons.

**Vodcasting:** is a series of digital media files which delivers videos according to the demand of web users and needs high speed internet connectivity. The library can utilise it for uploading the database of issue-return of documents and giving guidelines on the use of library catalogue, library premises, etc. (Carscaddon and Chapman, 2013).

It is very important for librarians to master some of these social media platforms in order to market their services and be relevant in the field of librarianship because information communication and technology is not static with the characteristics of social media. One of the characteristics of social media according to Chakrabarti (2016) is that users can perform any application directly from browsers and can control data as he or she wishes on the social media platform. Social media are not centralised due to lack of any control under conventional media systems, every user has access to it at the same time so far there is internet connectivity. Users directly communicate with the content and its creators by exchanging information in a twinkle of an eye unlike the traditional media that will take days or month before the user will get feedback. Web users can do more than just to access information; users can share their opinion about what the library shares and ask questions about library services, programmes, etc. It is simple and easy to use for the web user. So web users do not need to acquire any knowledge for using these media. Social media is users friendly especially among the youth who are the major users of academic library.

# Significance of using Social Media and marketing in Libraries

At this present age every library is connected with different types of social media to maximize the gap among libraries and users. Social media creates an effective platform to make users access and share their information with other users with far distance.

Social media helps the library professionals to make things easy for them and for their readers to increase their capacity to build good relationship among library and users (Anwar & Zhiwei, 2019).

Social media 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. Also, social media is useful for user registration. Registration is quite easy for the user and the library with the use of social media; it allows users to update their profile via their mobile phone through text messages and apps downloaded for certain smart phones and tablets.

Through the use of social media users can enjoyed reference services instead of coming to the library physically, this saves time. This buttress one of the five laws of Ranganathan that says 'do not waste the time of the library users'. At this present age of ICTs social media is a powerful tool to engage the library users from remote location to the library resources and services. Users are able to get answers to specific questions or queries by using social media (Anwar & Zhiwei, 2019). It is also helpful to elicit ideas and suggestions. Thus, it enhances reference service. Social media can be used to promote special programmes and events of the library such as awards, seminars, conferences, workshops; exhibitions etc. library management can encourage programmes and events by reviewing, and sharing with their users and the academic community.

Messages can be sent to users through the use of social media, and such 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 lists which is more beneficial to library. Social media helps users in choosing library resources for their research work and making it easy for them to add content to the library's website.

According to Kallio (2015), social media is cheaper compared to library software. Social media is not highly expensive user can have access to social media through the use of android phone. User can afford benefits of social media by paying phone service provider fees for data. 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. It was observed that in some academic libraries that have e library most of the users come to the e library to use data allocated to them for a semester for social media.

Social media paved the way for users to become a publisher of his ideas and views because there is no restriction of ideas and views on social media except in some platforms that has rules and regulations for their group members. Thus, Social media enable users to become publisher of ideas and views.

Purpose of using the Social Media in Libraries The purpose of social media in libraries is enormous because most of the library users are youths who are therefore familiar with these media. Social media 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 query and to develop communities. It also informs users about latest arrivals and news about the library to encourage discussions among users about new arrivals to build discussion groups. This serves as a marketing strategy for the library. Library users are to be given links to recommended Internet resources, book reviews, new arrivals, etc.

Social media can be used as a communication tools among librarians about their professional development. A librarian in Nigeria can communicate with a colleague in other country remotely, before this can happen there must be strong internet connectivity in the library. Also, social media can build an e-reputation for the library from modernizing the library and upgrading from the old ways of rendering services to users. This is very necessary in this century because the world is now a global village. It also serve as a platform for users to discuss among the users and staffs about the services of the library and their grievances. It provides entertainment or amusement for users, because users can send and receive entertainment videos, crack jokes, discuss politics etc on the platform. Social media differs from other communication methods due to the users' ability to be more than receivers. Through social media users can comment, like and share contents with others. We Are Social (2015) reported that over 208 billion people worldwide have social media accounts. From 2014, the numbers of active social media accounts have grown 12 %. (We Are Social 2015)

Social media are dynamic and can change rapidly as technology itself changes. 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 librarians need to change their role accordingly in the hi-tech digital environment of 21st century to continue to deliver and market their services to the web users.

#### Conclusion

This paper discussed how libraries are using social media applications in marketing library services. From the foregoing it is apparent that social media is well-recognised and well-accepted open discussion for marketing library and information services. Growing population of clientele and librarians using Social networking is an indication that it is an ideal vehicle for marketing the services of libraries to patrons (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012:4). Modern libraries have been putting increasing emphasis on marketing to satisfy users' needs and facilitate interactions between libraries and users. In the Internet age, social media seems to be an "easy" tool for librarians to promote their services and collections. Therefore, a symbiotic relationship between the libraries Nigerbiblious Vol. 32, No. 2, July - Dec. 2022

and social media are needed to present together best of the physical and digital environment to create learning hubs.

## Suggestions

On the basis of social media study the following suggestions are made:

- High speed internet connectivity must be provided in the library so that all users can utilize the benefits of he social med a.
- All libaries should develop their own website so that they can build their own social media plan and social media services.
- 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. Seminar, workshops, etc. must be organised by the professional bodies to enrich their knowledge and to fill the knowledge gaps in the library.
- Research should be conducted to investigate the use of different social media among students and general public and how the y can be properly utilized by libary.

### Reference

About Instagram (2015). Istagram. Retrieved from https://instagram.com/about/faq/

About Linkedin (2015) Linkedlin. Retrieved January 5, 2022 from

About Pinterest. (2015). Pinterest. Accessed from <a href="https://about.pinterest.com/fi">https://about.pinterest.com/fi</a>
Anwar ,M & Zhiwei, T (2019). Social media makes things possible for librians: A critical note

Retrieved July 10, 202 2 from Doi:10.3429/AJ BSR.2019.06000985

Aqil, M. & Siddique, M. A. (2010). Blogs and blogging in library. *India Journal of Library and Information Science*, 2(4).Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/270876825

Bennett, Shea. 2013. A Brief History Of Social Med a (1969-2012). Retrieved from <a href="http://www.adweek.com/socialtime/ssocial-media-1969-2012/487353">http://www.adweek.com/socialtime/ssocial-media-1969-2012/487353</a>

Bradley, P. (2012). Why librarians must use social meda. Retrieved January 5, 2022 from http://www.slideshare.net/Philbradley/why-librarians-must-use-social-media

- Carscaddon, L. & Chapman, K. (2013). Twitter as a marketing tool for libraries. In Thomsett-Scott, B.C. (Ed.), Marketing with Social Media: A LITA Guide. Chicago: American Library Association.
- Castronovo, C. & Huang, L. (2012). Social media is an alternative marketing Communication Model. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*, 6 (1). 117-134.
- Chakrabarti, C. (2016). Social media and libraries: A symbiotic relationship for 21st century librarianship. *International Journal of Digital Library Services*, 6(2). Retrieved from <a href="https://www.ijodls.in">www.ijodls.in</a>
- Ebrand. 2015. Some ja Nuoret 2015. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.ebrand.fi/somejanuoret 2015/2-suosituimmat-sosiaalisen-medianpalvelut/">http://www.ebrand.fi/somejanuoret 2015/2-suosituimmat-sosiaalisen-medianpalvelut/</a>
- Ezeani, C. N & Igwesi, U.(2012). Using social media for dynamic library service delivery:
- Facebook. (2015). Company information, our history. Retrieved from htt/newroom..fb.com/company-info/
- Gunton, L. & Davis, K. (2012). Beyond broadcasting: Customer service, community and information experience in the Twittersphere. *Reference Service Retrieve*, 40(2), 224-227.
- Hudson, M. (2020). What is social media? Retrieved January 5, 2022 from, Dotdash publishing family.
- Jain, P. (2013). Application of social media in marketing library & information services: A global perspective. *European Journal of business Economics and Accountancy*, 1(1,)
  - Kallio, K (2015). The effectiveness of social media as a marketing communication tactic. Accessed from https://.www.theseus.fi>handle.
- Kaplan, A. M. & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, united, the challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business Horizon*, 53, 59-68.

- Merriam Website Social Med a (2021). In Merriam Webster:com dictionary. Retrieved January 5, 2022 from <a href="http://merriam/bebster.com/dictionary/social0/020media">http://merriam/bebster.com/dictionary/social0/020media</a>
- -Wester.com dictionary. Retrieved January 5, 202 2 from <a href="http://merriamwebster.com/dictionary/socia0020media">http://merriamwebster.com/dictionary/socia0020media</a>
- -Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved January 5, 2022 from <a href="http://merriamwebster.com/dictionary/social0/020media">http://merriamwebster.com/dictionary/social0/020media</a>
- Solis, B. (2010) *Defining Social Media:* 2006 2010. Retrieved January 5, 2022 from www. <a href="http://www.briansolis.com/2010/01/defining-social-media-the-saga-continues/">http://www.briansolis.com/2010/01/defining-social-media-the-saga-continues/</a> the nigeria experience. Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 814. Retrieved from <a href="https://digitalcon.mons.unleulibphilpac/814">https://digitalcon.mons.unleulibphilpac/814</a>
- We are social (2015). Social media. Retrieved January 5, 2022 from www. http://bit.ly/DSMCN15.
- We Are Social. (2015). Digital, social and mobile worthvide in 2015. Retrieved from http://wearesocial.net/blog/2015/01/digital-social-mobile-worldwide-2015/