

Perception of Librarians towards Use of Social Media for Information Service Delivery: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract

This study conceptualizes how librarians perceive social media in library and information service delivery. The study consults and review previous research on the use of social media to provide service delivery by librarians by librarians. Social media encourages librarians to create new knowledge, ideas, and services and share it across their community of users. Service delivery is the primary function of any university library. Due to the difficult nature of traditional library services, libraries now embrace and adopt some social media tools for service delivery. This research highlighted the opportunities offer by social media to improve service delivery, the study also discuss the categorization of social media, types of social media, applicability of social media, challenges face by librarians when using social media and strategies on incorporating social media when using service delivery. Based on the conceptual review carried out, majority of studies reveals that librarians use social media and ICT in information service library and the most use form of social media is the Facebook, WhatApps and twitter, but, however, they do encounter obstacles in terms when using the social media. The study concludes that librarians actually use social media for library information service delivery, but yet there is a lot of challenges for proper use of social media in library and information delivery. Therefore, the study recommends that university libraries should incorporate more social media to provide effective services to their clients and adequate finance should be provided regularly by the university management to improve the use of social media in information service delivery and finally librarians should render more proactive and more quality social media services to meet the information needs of clients

Keywords: Social Media, Information Service Delivery, Librarians, Information

1.Introduction

The development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), particularly the Internet has become pervasive that today libraries are using social media to make their services more popular and user-friendly. The concept of a library as a physical place where one can visit to get information is rapidly changing to a social cyberspace where users access information, communicate and contribute to existing body of knowledge. The social media has gradually crept into the library profession which has become a growing tool that is being used to communicate with more potential library users; extending and offering better services to users. In view of this, Tise, (2009) stated that the social media is a new model of online services that encourages an increased flow of information from the library to users and from users back to the library.

The evolution of the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) has transformed the whole globe and presents a new way of communication. The limitless connectivity and potential to create an open social order and system of interaction and collaboration have been made possible only because of the development in information and communication technologies (Parveen, 2011). Therefore, social media is viewed as a platform for serving patrons in a more specialized, interactive and value added way. Ezeani & Eke (2011) stated that the most applicable technology for library services is the social media tools where librarians can interact with their users to study their needs and give a feedback; photo sharing, and where archival pictures can be posted to users or uploaded on the library website. Social media encourages librarians to create new knowledge, ideas, and services and share it across their community of users. As such, users are therefore exposed to an ever greater variety of knowledge, and improved information service delivery. Furthermore, librarians would gain advice and expertises on issues that arise in their professional work as a result of their interaction on social media (Gruber, 2008).Libraries by their orientation are service providers; the satisfaction of the clientele has always been their objectives and goals. Thus, the library provides various types of resources and services in order to meet up with the needs of its users. Nevertheless, these



resources are selected, acquired, organized and stored for the purpose of meeting up with its user's information needs. Academic libraries are one of those numerous types of libraries that exist in the information world. In view of this, Edoka (2000) defined academic libraries as "libraries that are found in most institutions of higher learning such as polytechnics, colleges of education and universities". He maintained that librarians are in charge of higher learning institutions' libraries; they perform and render different kinds of services to its users still in the old traditional way. However, with advancement in technology, librarians are now turning to social media for information service delivery of their clientele and also to meet up their professional needs and demands. Therefore, Social media according to Ezeah, Asogwu and Edogor (2013), referred to modern interactive communication channels through which people connect to one another, share ideas, experiences, pictures, messages and information of common interest. On their part, Gupta, Gautham & Khare, (2014) refers to it as means of connecting members of various internet communities.

On the basis of the above, social media offers boundless opportunities that are highly valued for their ability to connect libraries with users who may be unaware of their existence. Thus, providing specialized information service delivery. Mathews, (2008) suggested that librarians can create services that are more responsive and attuned to the changing needs of users. In the same vein Sadeh, (2007) argued that making social media presence remains pertinent and fundamental to meet users' expectations particularly the younger ones. Therefore, to effectively deploy these social media for information service delivery, librarians must be to embrace it. Meanwhile, Bradley & McDonald (2011) stated that there are barriers that prevent the use of social media such as perceptions of social media as a triviality, security issues or lack of understanding of social media. Hence, the objective of this study is perception of librarians towards use of social media for service delivery. The concept is important today, for instance, internet live statistics presents that over 3 trillion of people globally are using the Internet out of which about 74% are engaged in social media tools (Internet live statistic, 2015). Hence, this study explored the perceptions of librarians on using social media to promote library service delivery to both existing and potential users (students and lecturers). On the basis of this, this study would pay attention to find out what challenges librarians face when using social media in service delivery, discuss the categorization of social media, talk on the types of social media, discuss the applicability of social media in library service delivery, talk on the merits and demerits of social media and possible strategies on incorporating social media in library service.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Social Media

Chitumbo, (2015) defined social media as online tools whose principle aim is to offer social interactions and exchange of items/products between and or among people with common interests. According to him Social media presents an opportunity to librarians to use them and render service and meet the demand of users as it is popular among students and the young generation. It is a fact that developments in the area of ICTs brought about the existence of social media which has gradually become an indispensable tool for librarians in the area of information service delivery. The use of social media has affected the operations and information service delivery of libraries, as it provides librarians with innovative and effective ways of interaction and collaboration with their users (Ayodele, 2009). The concept enjoys attentions of researcher one of them is Denis, (2018) who posit that social media is a tool used for transmitting the idea or thought or information between one to another and understanding through the interaction; in other words, it is the act of sharing or exchanging information, ideas or feelings. Meanwhile, in the field of library and information science, social media can actually help to promote the services of library and information centers to develop the proficiency about technology of professionals and other side like users.

In addition, Akporhonor & Olise (2015) define social media as a tools that librarians can use for library services in order to maintain their relevance in this century. They added that social media are new media for effective promotion of library and information services. Furthermore, Olufunke, A.O. (2017) sees it as a medium that connect libraries to their patrons outside the physical buildings and build relationships with them. Due to its advantages, observations show that globally, many university libraries have embraced the use of social media in their library services. Social media is highly valuable for its ability to connect libraries with users; they are also vital tools which help the librarians to generate, disseminate, exchange and share information as well as to gather knowledge. Social media also has the capacity of improving librarians' professional skills in order to compete and work effectively in a rapid changing environment (Onuoha, 2013). With the potentials embodied in social media for effective information service delivery, different types of social media exist, notably among them are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogs, Myspace, YouTube, and Flickr are available to the librarians for information service delivery.

On their part, Ezeani & Igwesi (2012) identified six types of social media available to Nigeria Information Professionals "Facebook, Myspace, Blogs, Wikis, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr". They argue that they

are used for outreach, marketing of library collection, transfer and dissemination of information to users. However, Alyson (2012) added that “Facebook and Twitter are capable and are important tools for information dissemination, while Blogs and Youtube are used to share information.

On this note, the use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Wikis, RSS feeds, YouTube, etc. in the delivery of library and information services has become necessary for the survival of university libraries. As a result of this, university libraries are incorporating new technologies such as social media in order to remain relevant in their universities and to meet the information needs of their patrons. For instance, Facebook is used for communication between librarians and their patrons. Library patrons can communicate with librarians for enquiries. They also receive information on their enquiries. Facebook is used for sharing of information and marketing library services. Social media enable communication among libraries and their users thereby serving as an opportunity for information dissemination and the marketing of new services. Social media are used for marketing of library products and services, announce news and for fund raising. Instant messaging is used to enhance reference service delivery processes. Social media are platforms that enable communication among libraries and their users thereby serving as an opportunity for information dissemination. They are used as tools by librarians and other information professionals to reach their patrons irrespective of their locations. They are platforms to share information, promote and market new services. Many organisations are applying social media to improve their services and interact with their clients. On the other hand, Service delivery is the primary function of any university library. The cumbersome nature and the inadequacies of traditional library services have prompted university libraries to adopt social media in library service delivery. However, one of the challenges facing library services in university libraries in Nigeria is the unwillingness of the librarians to incorporate ICT in terms of knowledge and skills to implement the modern library services (Ojedokun & Ayoka, 2015). Many library staff in academic institutions still relies only on the manual ways of rendering library services and do not bother acquiring competencies to incorporate the fast-growing technological trends in the profession.

3. Categorization of Social Media Tools

White, Mary Gormandy (2014) stated that categories of social media includes but not limited to the following:

- **Social Connections:** Keeping in touch with friends and family members is one of the greatest benefits of social networking. Facebook, Twitter, Google + and MySpace are some of the most widely-used websites for building social connections online.
- **Multimedia Sharing:** Social networking platform makes it easy to share video and managing digital photography content online. Some of the most popular sites for multimedia sharing are YouTube, Flickr and Picasa.
- **Professional:** Professional social networks are designed to provide opportunities for career-related growth. Professionals here connect, while others are focused on specific occupations or interests. A few examples of professional social networks are LinkedIn, Classroom
- **Informational:** Informational communities are made up of people seeking answers to everyday problems. For example, when you are thinking about starting a home improvement project or want to learn how to go green at home, you may perform a web search and discover countless blogs, websites, and forums filled with people who are looking for the same kind of information. A few examples include: Super Green, HGTV Discussion Forums, HGTV message boards, Do-It-Yourself Community.
- **Educational:** Educational networks are where many students go in order to collaborate with other students on academic projects, to conduct research for school, or to interact with professors and teachers via blogs and classroom forums. Examples of such educational social networks are Student Room, the Math, forum and ePALS ,School Blog.
- **Hobbies:** One of the most popular reasons many people use the Internet is to conduct research on their favorite projects or topics of interest related to personal hobbies. When people find a website based on their favorite hobby, they discover a whole community of people from around the world who share the same passion for those interests. Examples of hobby-focused social networking sites include, Oh My Bloom, My Place at Scrapbook.com and Sport Shouting
- **Academic:** Academic researchers who want to share their research and review results achieved by colleagues may find academic-specific social networking to be quite valuable. Examples of online communities for academics include Academia.edu and Connotea Collaborative Research. Moreover, Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), adds to the categorization of social media to include: Collaborative Project (for example, Wikipedia), Blogs and micro blogs (for example, Twitter), Social news networking sites (for example, Digg and Leakernet), content communities (for example, YouTube and Daily Motion), Social

networking sites (for example, Facebook), Virtual game-worlds (for example, World of Warcraft), and Virtual social worlds (for example, Second Life).

4. Merits and Demerits of Social Media

People from all walks of life, regardless of their skin colour, education, social status, and nationality, use social media, gradually the benefits of using social media is spreading. Today, social media have improved the way people and industries transact, communicate and create relationships with colleagues, peers and or prospective clients. On this note, the following are merits and demerits of social media.

Merits of social media

- Worldwide Connectivity
- Commonality of Interest
- Real-Time Information Sharing
- Free Advertising
- Increased News Cycle Speed
- Demerits of social media
- Face to Face Connections are endangered
- Cyber bullying and Crimes against Children
- Risks of Fraud or Identity Theft
- Time Waster
- Corporate Invasion of Privacy
- Negative Health Consequences
- Diminishing Privacy

5. Types of Social Media

Social media are platform that connect people who share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections.

- **Profile-based SNS:** Profile-based services are primarily organized around members' profile pages. Bebo, Facebook and MySpace, are all good examples of this. Users often include third party content in order to enhance their profiles, or as a way of including information from other web services and SNS.
- **Content-based SNS:** In these services, the user's profile remains an important way of organizing connections, but plays a secondary role to the posting of content. Content-based communities include Flickr, Shelfari, and YouTube.com.
- **White-label SNS:** Most SNS offer some group-building functionality, which allows users to form their own mini-communities within sites. Platforms such as Ning and People Aggregator broadbandmechanics.com.
- **Multi-User Virtual Environments:** Sites such as second life, an online virtual world, allow users to interact with each other's avatars – a virtual representation of the site member.
- **Mobile SNS:** Many social network sites such as MySpace, MYUBO and Twitter offer mobile phone versions of their services that allowing members to interact with their networks via their phones. Increasingly, too, there are mobile-led and mobile-only based communities allows users to share and view video over mobile networks.
- **Micro-blogging/ Presence updates:** Micro-blogging services such as Twitter and Jaiku allow you to publish short (140 characters, including spaces) messages publicly or within contact groups.
- **People Search:** People search is another important web development. There are various kinds of social and people search, but sites like Wink generate results by searching across the public profiles of multiple social network sites allows search by name, interest, location and other information published in profiles and allowing the creation of Web-based "dossiers" on individuals. Other types of social media include RSS feed, Wiki, Twitter, Instant messaging, Slideshare, Blogs, Whatapps, Myspace, Podcast,Linkdeln, Reseachgate and so on.

6. Applicability of Social Media in Library Service Delivery

User approach towards library is changing gradually; it wants most practical and speedily information in e- learning age. But retrieve quick and easy information to user is a big challenge to library professional. Social media helps library professional to share information with users in the easiest way for digital library environment. The possible implication of social media can be successful by conducting maximum research and experiment on social networking from different point of view on library. Social media tools were helpful in promoting library service delivery. There is an urgent need for libraries to adopt the new social media tools in their services as a strategy to

embrace change while promoting a participatory role for library users in knowledge creation. Some of the applicability of social media in library and Information Include, understanding and articulating the nature of social media, creating webpage and content, establishing friendly user interface over the network, creating online database management, evaluating and applying information, and assisting users with skill acquisition, searching and navigating the web, creating social network space, teaching, and providing quality online library services, performing Reference Desk (VRD) through the use of Wikipedia

7. Challenges Librarians Face when using Social Media to Provide Services?

According to Olufunke, (2017) librarians are face with enormous challenges but most common one are:

- Inadequate ICT facilities in the library
- Poor internet access
- Lack of finance
- Epileptic poor supply
- Lack of management support
- Lack of corporation among staff
- Lack of ICT skills
- Lack of awareness of social media tools
- Lack of personal knowledge
- Poor maintenance of e-library

These are some of the challenges that hinder proper implementation of social media in library service delivery, however great commitment of all stakeholders should be put in place to overcome the challenges.

8. Possible Strategies on Incorporating Social Media in Library Service Delivery

According to Chitumbo, (2015) the following are some of the possible strategies to incorporate social media in to library service delivery.

- Libraries can create social links such as Facebook page, fan-pages and library blogs onto the library website. Such platforms would allow interaction between library and users and among users. They can also be used as marketing tools for library resources and services, while students would be able to access and share concerns and experiences on library services with peers.
- Library can create accounts for all students on social media platforms to ensure easy and equal participation among users on the available network. By creating accounts for students they will comfortably use their mobile gadgets to access library services via social links.
- Libraries should create a position for social media librarian who should be responsible for all activities on social media.
- Establish an social media policy to guide the use of social media on the institutional network

9. Conclusion

Based on the conceptual review carried out, majority of studies on social media and use of ICT in library and information science agrees that Nigerian librarians actually use social media for effective service delivery and the most use form of social media is the Facebook, WhatApps and twitter, but, however, they do encounter obstacles in terms of poor communication of the network, conducive environment, poor network, lack of maintenance of e-library, inadequate computers to serve all the library user and inability of the library users to adapt to changing social media role in library service delivery as some of them resist the use of social media for research and prefer the old traditional method. The study also understood from the previous studies that Facebook is most use, but users normally browse for socialization rather than academic purpose. However, this study conclude that librarians actually use social media for library information service delivery, but yet a lot of challenges for proper use of social media in library and information delivery exists, hence the need to address those challenges, therefore, the study recommends that university libraries should incorporate more social media to provide effective services to their clients and adequate finance should be provided regularly by the university management to improve the use of social media in information service delivery and finally librarians should render more proactive and more quality social media services to meet the information needs of clients.

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