

SOCIAL NETWORKING AND LIBRARIES

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Abstract: - *Academic libraries are increasingly using social media to serve the users community because of the changes in rendering online information services, changes in adopting technologies, changes in social interaction, changes in service context and changes in procurement of information resources. The paper focuses on the various social networking sites.*

Keywords - **Social media, Academic libraries, Social networking Sites.**

1.Introduction

The social networking sites are the platform where we can build our networks and relations with users. These sites are useful in keeping contact with patrons as well as other libraries. The social network sites (SNSs) have increasingly become an important part of student's everyday lives. The SNS allow library professionals to deliver desired information to the users within a minimum time. A social networking programme provides way for digital librarians to develop rapport with users, extend general awareness of the digital collection and establish librarian as knowledgeable, helpful and easily accessible source of authoritative information regarding given subject area.

The esteemed libraries are using SNS for sharing similar information content to the similar category of users. There are many social networking sites available from where the individual interact with each other. The various SNS are Face book, MySpace, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, . Blogs, Wikis, etc. These are just a few of the social networking options available on the Internet today.

2.Social Networking Sites:

Social Networking Sites are new developing technology in sharing and disseminating information product within the users. The primary role of SNSs in library is to make interaction between library staff and users. The SNS are effective tool for library professionals to promote

their services as well as marketing of the information product.

The usage of the technology increases day by day with positive effect. Library professionals offer any service through SNS which is purely based on web.SNS playing a vital role in building better relations in library staff and users. It helps not only in sharing information but also personal thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines social networking as “the use or establishment of social networks or connections; the use of Web sites which enable users to interact with one another, find and contact people with common interests, etc.” (Social Networking, 2010). The varied social networking tools are increasingly used by individuals of all ages but are especially popular among young people and college students. Due to high use among these two groups, many academic librarians advocate using these new social Web platforms to reach out to student populations (Farkas, 2007; Mathews, 2006,Mathews, 2007; Milstein, 2009).

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) defines social networking sites as web based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connections and those made by others within the system.

The term SN referred to, as a web based platform from different culture settings can connect and interact with each other.

3.Major Social Networking Web sites

3.1 Facebook

Facebook is social media network. It facilitates the information communication and images sharing and also instant communication purpose it helps the library readers. Online social networking, especially Facebook, has numerous pedagogical advantages for both lecturers and students “Social networking can support students’ indirect resources, thoughts, ideas, productions, writings, notes, etc. This kind of sharing can provide students with insights into the workings of other students”

Facebook with an 85 percent market share among college students (Mathews, 2007b). As a result of its strong user base among college students, Facebook appears to be the most logical social networking Web site to be used by an academic library. Most recent discussions about social networking focus on Facebook.

3.2 Twitter

Microblogging is a newer blog option made popular by Twitter.According to research survey, twitter is the most preferred social media channel for librarians because, it is quick, easy and concise and it is possible to schedule tweets. Twitter is a form of free micro-blogging which allows users to send and receive short public messages called tweets. Tweets are limited to no more than 140 characters, and can include links to blogs, web pages, images, videos and all other material online. Twitter allows registered users to

post brief messages for other users who follow the account and to comment on other user posts. Unlike traditional blogs, sites such as Twitter allow librarians to go where the students are already located. Libraries post hour changes, events, new resources available, search tips, links to the library Web sites

3.3 WhatsApp

WhatsApp Messenger is a proprietary, cross-platform instant messaging subscription service for smart phones and selected feature phones that uses the internet for communication. WhatsApp Inc. was founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, both former employees of Yahoo. The company is based in Mountain View, California and employs 55 people. It is currently in the process of takeover after Facebook announced its acquisition of WhatsApp Inc. In addition to text messaging, users can send each other images, video and audio media messages as well as, their location using integrated mapping features.

3.4 YouTube

It is a video-sharing website, headquartered in San Bruno, California. The service was created by three former PayPal employees in February 2005 and has been owned by Google since late 2006. YouTube is popular in academic libraries for creation of guides and induction and the video clippings are used for demonstration purpose through which we train the readers regarding use of library resources. Google Groups: This is a feature of Google application that makes it easy to

communicate with the groups of people such as project teams, departments, office locations and special interest groups for send email to group members, invite members to group meetings, sharing of contents and online discussions and also question and answers purpose it is the best social media for online mass communication.

3.5 Blogs and Wikis

It offers another social platform to reach university students. Blogs are Web pages consisting of user-supplied content in chronological order (Boxen, 2008). Wikis are open Web pages that allow approved users to add and alter a page's content (Boxen, 2008). Many students have their own blogs and most have encountered Wikis at some time. Thus, most students are familiar with both Web formats. Blogs and Wikis encourage interaction and collaboration among users, an important component for a new outreach tool.

Blogs have several potential uses by academic libraries. Blogs encourage user interaction through their comment feature, which allows students to provide feedback regarding the information provided and the library itself. In one form, librarians can post news about the library as well as events occurring at the library.

4. Effective Practices

Overall, social networking should not be avoided in academic libraries looking to reach out to their students. The ultimate goal of librarians is to make library resources available to students. If

social networking helps to achieve that goal, it should be actively pursued. However, social networking outreach must factor in the concerns discussed above to effectively use this new technology. Any outreach via social networking must consider the individual user base to determine which sites are most used by students as well as how students would use library resources on a social networking platform.

Libraries must continuously monitor how their social networking attempts are working among their users and make any necessary adjustments to their platforms that could make the new service more effective. Ultimately, there no single model for social networking within academic libraries as no student population is the same as another. Additionally, academic libraries must advertise so that students are able to find them on various social networking Web sites (Mathews, 2007). This could be on the official library Web site, on bulletin boards around campus, in the student newspaper, during bibliographic instruction classes, or within the physical library itself.

The campus community must be aware of the library's presence in social networking platforms for them to be an effective tool and this includes in-person networking with other campus departments. Social networking by academic libraries has the potential to reap great results, but librarians must consider the most effective methods for their particular library and student population.

5. Conclusion

Social networking Web site is a new technology offering promising new outreach options for academic librarians. They provide a new platform for reaching students beyond the traditional library building and Web site by allowing students to access librarians and the library's resources without leaving the comfort of the Web sites they use the most.

Organizing a public awareness forum such as library orientation, conferences, symposia, workshops to create awareness and educate librarians and users on the social networking services and applications. This will help to stimulate new ideas, sensitize and create awareness to utilize the library resources to maximum extent.

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