

ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN LIBRARIES

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Abstract: - *Social network site in Library brings visibility to the library, its collection, and enhances its services and their reach; along with these benefits it also brings responsibilities too. These services demand commitment, aware of current technological trends, regular monitoring and marketing of the service or product. The present paper highlights the need, purpose, Role of librarian and Social Networking sites in libraries.*

Keywords - Social Networking Sites (SNS), Social Media, Libraries, Library services.

Introduction:

In the age of ICT and Information explosion, there is a great interest in how the internet & computers can be combined so as to provide higher quality of social communication. The terms 'social media' and 'social networks' are relatively new in the Internet. They describe a virtual space in the web where individuals are able to participate and share information, ideas, images, and other contents. This is considered the second generation of the Internet or Web 2.0 . The emergence of social networks represented a change from a 'static' Internet to a more 'dynamic' web as a platform based on collective intelligence with researchers generating and sharing contents.

Social networking is a social Structure that lets the user interact and work collaboratively with other users, including the ability to browse, search, invite friend to connect & interact with web world.(Mishra, 2008)

Social media enable human relationships through technology. Social media are the media for social interaction. In this age of ICT social media can be used everywhere from education to business & other various fields. Linked In & Twitter which enable users to share information about themselves, photos, video & current news or announcement & to connect to other member of the website (Pfeil, Arjan & phiris, 2009)

Social Media have started to be used in libraries too because they could not remain

inactive in front of such technological developments. Various types of libraries (i.e. academic, public, special) started, both abroad and in Greece, to adopt social network services and to satisfy the needs of users. More specifically, libraries began to develop personal face book pages in order to better serve users' information needs and also to communicate and promote their services as well as their activities to its users (Gogkou and Vasilakaki, 2013).

Definitional Analysis:

Social Networking Sites (SNS):

Social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi – public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connections and those made by others within the system (Boyd, 2007).

Social Media are primarily Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings.” - Wikipedia

Social Media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and Networks

“An umbrella term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words and pictures.”

Need of Social Networking Sites in Libraries:

Social Networking Sites are interactive mediated technologies that facilitate the creation & sharing of information ideas, career interests & other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. It was a web – based medium through which people can share content, personal opinion, spread news, swap perspectives and generally communicate with other people. Evidently social media brings into use the newer, better and more useful systems and technologies that are for everyone. Libraries have historically been places to receive information, create an environment to disseminate the information; but they had a limited role in contributing information flow for organizing, disseminating, archiving, evaluating and systematising for better world. It is a fact that libraries are part of the solution and as information professionals we are bound to deliver information service for the enhancement of the society. This accountability makes us to understand social media for implementation, delivering of service for connecting with our user.

Purpose of Social Networking Sites Usage in Libraries:

- To provide Alerts service as well as spread current news
- Social media should be used for marketing of library services and its products
- To provide quick updates to online users
- To provide Library news and press release

- Modernisation of library images & e-reputation
- To reach a new audience of potential users

Role of Librarian for implementing Social Networking tools in Libraries:

According to Canty (2013) Social Networking Sites are applications which permit their members to serve dual roles as both the suppliers and the consumers of content. The exchange of a wide variety of media content such as film, photos, text or audio files among others are some of the benefits of SNS.

That's why Libraries should spend some time on social networking site application. To work with the social media to respond to library users, to upload and content creation, to share & to disseminate is not very difficult. Since the user has the privileges to allocate or Share the activity among different persons, it helps us to distribute the workload among our staff. This will enable interaction, shared content creation, and make the web presence fresh.

The rich features in social media demands that Librarians understand and learn the features, connect to the users for discussion, conversation and communication modes of choice (telephone, Skype, Instant Messaging (IM). Short message system (SMS), texting, e-mail, virtual reference, tweets, posting etc.) Use of user-driven and user developed content and commentary & to know about the technology, its application, & user behaviour. Hence Abram (2005). Says "Librarian 2.0 is the guru of information age"

Social networking sites in Libraries:

Social Networking helps Libraries and Librarians with students and in the easiest way for digital library environment. Librarian can use in three broad activities in library services i.e. Information communication, Knowledge distribution and Knowledge organisation.

1. Face book: It is social network service and most popular now because it is useful for sharing the user profile, photos and personal information. It is also share the public & private messages. Face book is Librarian friendly, with many applications i.e. World Cat, JSTOR search, instant messaging system-to answer queries over chat. It is also useful in libraries for developing user database i.e. create user groups or profile like undergraduate, postgraduate students. Face book is useful for posting library events & its photographs i.e. Librarians Day, The world Book day, Teachers day, Science day and it also alerting user about upcoming events. We can use the blog features in Face book to inform the user about the new arrivals, most borrowed books etc. It is also useful for sending virtual gift for the special occasion about the student or faculty.

2. You Tube: It has certain user friendly features like play back, quality codes, 3D videos, content accessibility, etc. It is useful in libraries for developing Digital Video Library, Library website may share the most downloaded video relevant to a celebration

like Librarians day, environmental day, teachers day, father's day etc. It is also useful for uploading institutional events, videos i.e. guest lectures. Important celebration / meet like conference, seminar, library guide, library orientation etc.

3. Flickr: It is an image hosting social media service provider. Flickr supports the sharing videos, photographs to all or to a group, or to an individual and provides tools for organising the photographs. Flickr is a powerful photo storing & sharing social media tool available for free therefore librarian can use this tool to store, share and distribute new images/photos of library collections i. e. cover page of new arrivals of both books as well as journals can be disseminated to users via Flickr.

4. Library Thing: It is social cataloguing network is great for libraries and librarians can catalogue along with Amazon, the Library of congress, and more than 200 other libraries around the world. Librarian will get recommendations and easy tagging as well. It is freely available tool, it also allows a library to add 200 titles without any fee and charges.

5. Twitter: It is a micro blogging application, to keep users and staff updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections. Users can utilize this platform to type in short messages or status update. Librarians can use this platform to give

user firsthand information about new arrivals, current content.

6. MySpace: It is most popular social networking sites, which primarily have a social function allowing people to make friends, talk online and share resources. In academic institutions where the students are; libraries have taken advantage of this site to post, calendar, custom, catalogue search tools, and blog features to improve their presence.

7. LinkedIn: It is useful for professionals is a great way to get library patron connected with the people that can help them find information. Librarians can get users connected with specialists in their particular field of interest via LinkedIn. Librarians can use this service such as Strategic Dissemination of Information.

Advantages of use of Social Networking sites (SNS)

Following are the advantages:

- Most of the social networking tools are available free of cost.
- Social network sites requires minimum training
- It allows user to create, connect, contribute and share information
- It helps libraries to get closer to the users.
- It helps Students to use library
- It is way to grab the attention of new users.
- SNS helps students in locating library resources

Disadvantages of use of social networking sites (SNS)

Following are the Disadvantages:

- Lack of time for using social networking site
- Inadequate funding for libraries
- Inadequate library staff
- Failure of Electricity
- Slow speed of Internet
- Lack of training opportunities for library staff
- Lack of funding for libraries

Conclusion:

Social Networking Sites allow its participants to connect with each other and build relations among people who have the same interests. Social networking sites enable users to share and upload different types of photos, music & videos that they like to share with others. Use of social networking site in libraries can promote the users, services, resources, events and communications. In the age of ICT, changing needs of library users, library needs to be changed accordingly. Due to the introduction and advancement in the internet and World Wide Web, libraries in the present era are shifting to virtual libraries and because of this reason the frequency of the actual visitors to the library is reducing day by day. Therefore libraries should be well equipped with advance internet services.

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