

USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN EXTENDING UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SERVICES OF ASSAM: THE STATE OF THE ART

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Abstract: - Purpose: *The advent of Social Networking Sites and its rapid growth has influenced almost all fields and library is not an exception. Presently, these sites are playing vibrant role in order to communicate, organize and share information where users are accessing the information by using their hand held devices. Keeping in view the importance and use of Social Networking Sites especially by the Library management and the users, the present study is made on "Use of Social Networking Sites in extending University Library Services of Assam: The State of the Art".*

Study design/methodology/approach: *The study is delimited to ten university libraries of Assam which have been selected purposively. A prescribed questionnaire for the university librarian is prepared to collect data of the respective university library besides visiting libraries and interacting with the librarian and other library professionals for the primary data. Literature on the specific area have been scanned as the secondary data for getting information on Social Networking Sites and application of these in libraries for providing library services.*

Findings: *The university libraries under study have started to apply the Social Networking Sites to extend their services to the user community in limited way. Of the different applications of SSN, the study found that the libraries are applying only WhatsApp and Facebook onto their day to day workings.*

Originality/ value: *The study result highlights the effectiveness of the available Social Networking Sites and their area of use for extending of the library services which will definitely help the LIS professionals to select promotion strategies of library services using different Social Networking Sites.*

Keywords: Social Networking Sites; Library Services; University Libraries

Keywords: Library, Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube

1. Introduction

The rapid progress in information and communication technology has an impact in every walk of life. It has also brought a revolution in the scenario of traditional library techniques of collecting, organizing and disseminating the

information. The success of any library services and its effectiveness for supporting research and learning is mainly depends on accurate and well-timed information which is provided to its users. Thus, these types of information are disseminated through various medium to the users for its easy

access. The worldwide increasing demand for information has lead towards increased access of information from the Internet and through mobile communication and it has ultimately opened up doors for user friendly platforms such as the Social Networking Sites (SNSs). SNSs have been defined and discussed by different scholars in their own ways and explained that the SNSs as the online tools whose primary aim is to provide a platform for social interactions and exchange of ideas, views, items among people irrespective of their interests. Accessing information to collect, communicate, organize and share are the major areas of the present time that people are availing the benefits from different SNSs.

2. Review of Literature

Eness M. Miyanda Chitumbo, 2015 in their study indicated that over 80% of respondents are already engaged in SMTs only for socializing, not for academic purposes. The study identified some methods for incorporating SMTs by libraries for providing services such as the creation of social links, pages and blogs in the respective library websites with accounts of all users and establishing a social media librarian position which is to be responsible for all activities happening on social media platforms, and also provide a roadmap on SMTs adoption. However, because of the many benefits associated with SMTs, more than 80% of the respondents reported that they would support its adoption.

Abhijit Chakrabarti, 2016 suggested that 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. It further provide some recommendation for the benefit of the library professional before choosing the social media in the library such as provision of proper internet connectivity, development library websites and face book page and organization of seminars, workshops for librarian to enrich their knowledge etc.

Bakare, Olatunji Azeez, Yacob, Haliso, & Umar, Musa Yila, 2018 in their study found that blogs and WhatsApp are the widely used social media platforms for promoting library services in libraries and the use of social media platforms facilitates two-way communication, ease communication with library users, provides a forum for feedback, increases library users and financially profit librarians through traffic generated as users visits their blog pages. The study also indicated some challenges faced by librarians and recommendations were made such as the provision of adequate computers and Internet services, especially free Internet WiFi within the centers, and a viable ICT policy for its solutions.

J Arumugam & R, Balasubramani 2019 reported that Facebook is the major tool which is used by the library professionals in the age group of 31-50 for the purpose of sharing the library products and

services. Male respondents are found to use the social media enormously.

3. Significance of the study

As advancement in technology has changed the information seeking behavior of users which ultimately impact on delivery channels of information. That is why, librarians whose responsibility is to provide library and information service must move along with this trend. Now a days, SNSs are vibrant tools in order to communicate, organize and share the information where users can access the information by using their hand held devices. Keeping in view the advantages of SNSs, the present study is done on the topic “*Use of Social Networking Sites in extending University Library Services of Assam: The State of the Art*”.

4. Objective of the Study

i. To find out the different SNSs used in the university libraries of Assam;

ii. To identify the purpose for which each SNSs is used;

iii. To find out the services extended by libraries through SNSs.

5. Methodology

In the present study, descriptive survey method has been used. There are nineteen universities in Assam (UGC, 2018) and the present pilot study covers ten universities, which are selected purposively. A structured questionnaire and personal visits to the libraries under study for collection of data from the respective university librarians have been made for the study. The questionnaire consists of three areas (i) SNSs used by the particular library; (ii) Library services extended through SNSs; (iii) Purpose of using SNSs. Besides, in each area, an option “others” has been included where in respondents can opt for giving their views excluded in the respective list.

Table1: Universities under study

Sl No	Name of the University	Location	Central/ State/ Private	Yr of Estb	Name of the Library
1	Gauhati University	Guwahati	State	1948	Krishna Kanta Handiqui Library, GU
2	Assam Agricultural University	Jorhat	State	1969	Rev. B.M Pugh Library, AAU
3	Assam University	Silchar	Central	1994	Rabindra Library, AU
4	Tezpur University	Tezpur	Central	1994	Central Library, TU
5	Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University	Guwahati	State	2005	Central Library, KKHSOU
6	Assam Don Bosco University	Guwahati	Private	2009	Central Library, Assam Don Bosco University
7	Bodoland University	Kokrajhar	State	2009	Manoranjan Lahari Central Library, BU
8	National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam	Guwahati	State	2009	National Law University and Judicial Academy, Assam Library
9	Cotton University	Guwahati	State	2011	Dr. Surya Kumar Bhuyan Library, Cotton University
10	The Assam Royal Global University	Guwahati	Private	2017	Central Library, RGU

6. Data analysis and Discussion

After collecting the data through questionnaire, the data have been tabulated and discussed by calculating simple percentage.

Table 2: Use of SSNs at the University Libraries (N=10)

Social Networking Sites	No of respondents	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Facebook	4(40)	6 (60)
Twitter	1(10)	9(90)
Instagram	0	0
LinkedIn	1(10)	9(90)
You Tube	1(10)	9(90)
Flickr	0	0
WhatsApp	8(80)	2(20)
Others (not mentioned above)	0	0

Table2 highlights the social networking sites used at the university libraries by respective librarians for extending library services. It has been observed from the above table (Table 2) that WhatsApp is the most popular social networking site/ tool used by librarians followed by Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and LinkedIn. The SNSs Instagram, Flicker are not used by any of the librarians of selected universities.

Table 3: Library Services extended through SNS (N=10)

Library Services extended through Social Networking Sites	No of respondents	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Information Service	5 (50)	5 (50)
Current Awareness Service	2 (20)	8 (80)
Latest Arrivals	5 (50)	5 (50)
Online help service	0	10 (100)

News Dissemination	4(40)	6 (60)
Video Sharing	3(30)	7 (70)
User Education	0	10 (100)
Others (not mentioned above)	0	0

From the table 3 it has been found that 50 % of the libraries render their information service and latest arrivals of library documents followed by news dissemination service (40%), sharing of videos (30%) and current awareness service (20%) to their users through SNSs. It also highlights that till date none of these selected university libraries has taken initiative for providing online help service and user education service through SNSs.

Table 4: Purpose of using Social Networking Sites (N=10)

Purpose of using Social Networking Sites	No of respondents	
	Yes (%)	No (%)
Sharing up-to-date information	4 (40)	6(60)
Promotion of library products	2(20)	8(80)
Promotion of library services	7(70)	3(30)
Others (not mentioned above)	0	0

Table 4 represents the various purposes of using social networking sites in the university libraries by the librarians and it has been found that majority of them use social networking sites mainly for the promotion of their different library services among its users. 40% librarians reported that they use social networking sites for sharing up-to-date information related to their library events, important news to its user community

where as 20% librarians use it for promotion of their library products.

7. Discussion and Findings

With the development of science and technology and introduction of ICT in the every field of knowledge has brought about revolutionary changes in all fields including in education with ever changing stress in teaching-learning process. Library and Information System (LIS) is also not an exception. In coping with the changing library environment where ICT devices have been used extensively for information organization, dissemination processes, libraries are in need to undertake inclusive and wide reaching initiatives so that it be possible to develop custom and maintain the both print and electronic collection and services for the library users.

Use of social networking sites can play an important role in promotion of library services as well as improving the prominence of the library. The SSNs are considered as an effective platform for professional communication in any institutions. They can be useful for introducing library services with the help of web technology for the benefits of user community and LIS professionals.

The study result indicated that of the different SNSs, all the university libraries under study have introduced using social networking sites one or more for extending library services to the user community. WhatsApp and Facebook are the two

types of SNSs used mostly by the libraries, 80% and 40% respectively; other types of SNSs are less in use. 50% university libraries under study have extended Information and Latest arrival services through SNSs followed by news dissemination service by 40% libraries. On the other hand none of these libraries have provided user education and online help service through SNSs. It further has reported that 70% university libraries use SNSs mainly for promotion of their library services. Findings of the study also reveal that no any information either yes or no has been provided by the librarians in the respect of option “other” as shown in the table 2, 3 and 4.

The result of this study highlights on the importance of the available social networking sites and their area of use for extending of the library services. It will also help to develop an understanding among Library and Information Science professionals about importance and benefits of using the SNSs for extending library services as well as make them aware to select promotion strategies and SNSs etc keeping in mind the needs of their respective user group.

8. Suggestions

Based on above discussion following suggestions have been forwarded for consideration of their implementation by respective stake holders in order to make successful adoption and use of SNSs for providing library services.

- Librarians can create social links like fan-pages and blogs to the institutional or library websites, so that through which they can promote library services, resources and events.
- Develop a road map to show systematic stages through for the adoption of SNSs.
- All libraries should develop their own website so that they can build their own plan for using SNSs and provide service through it.
- Librarians should not only be aware about the SNSs but also must be trained and informed in using these for extending library services offered by institutions and organizations.

9. Conclusion

In this digital era, the use of SNSs has become very popular in every field, also in the educational institutions including libraries. It has been observed that for extending library services to the users, LIS professionals have shown interest on the use of SNSs. SNSs are the effective platform through which LIS professionals can communicate various types of users groups easily, timely and such other various advantageous factors. Among the LIS professionals, it is seen that they are more active and comfortable in using these SNSs because of almost no tech savvy nature. Findings of the study highlights that WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are most preferred and popular SNSs used by

librarians for extending library services, library products and sharing up-to-date information. Therefore, it is felt that for the effectiveness and easy accessibility of the SNSs, LIS professionals are to take necessary initiatives in popularising the importance of various SNSs for providing library services and emphasis should be given on the upgrading of information provided through them. Thus, the use of social networking sites for rendering library services, there is a need for orientation of the LIS professionals and the users about the effectiveness, values and it will help in upgrading of libraries in the present era.

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