

UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS BY LIBRARIANS FOR PROMOTING LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES IN NIGERIANS' TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN CROSS RIVER STATE

EMMANUEL UBI OMINI AND OSUOLALE, KEKAYO AYANLADE

(Received 16, October 2017; Revision Accepted 10, September 2018)

ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to determine the utilization of social media platforms for promoting library resources and services in Nigerians' tertiary institutions in Cross River State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design method was employed for this study. The sample for this study comprised of 300 librarians in three Nigerian tertiary institutions in Cross River State. The questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. Frequency counts and mean were used to analyse the data collected. The study revealed that Facebook and Blogs are the most frequently used social media platforms for promoting library resources and services in the libraries. Findings also showed librarians utilize social media platforms in promoting two-way communication as the highest followed by making connections with library users easily, and provides forum for feedback and increases library users /usage and providing up-to date information in campus as the least. Some challenges librarians encounter was also discovered; hence recommendations were made. These include encouraging more participation on social media platform through seminars and symposiums amongst other recommendations.

KEYWORDS: Utilization, Social Media, Platforms, Librarians, Library, Resources, Services, Tertiary Institution.

INTRODUCTION

University library offer different services to users. These services rendered are lending services, referral services, reference services, indexing and abstracting services. Library resources on the other hand are information materials which include print and non-print formats. Library and information services are resources that should satisfy the need of library users.

However, the extent to which resources and services satisfy the needs of users will be determined by the extent of which the users are aware and utilize such resources and services. One important channel through which these services and resources can efficiently be fast-tracked by librarians is through the use of social media platform.

The fact that the basic values of the libraries are gradually heading towards information change at

Emmanuel Ubi Omini, Department of Library and Information Science University of Calabar, Calabar
Osuolale, Kekayo Ayanlade, Medical Library, University of Calabar Teaching Hospital

a time where internet connectivity is so necessary and the needs of information seekers are becoming more agitating by the new trends of information search. No doubt, social media platforms are potential tools for promoting university library resources and services in the 21st century.

This change in information seeking behavior has engineered libraries to explore new means of providing information and interacting with their users more frequently and with ease. It is no longer news that libraries are evolving to meet the needs of 21st century information seekers. The trend is that libraries are exploiting different technologies to re-establish connections with their users who have resorted to the internet. To keep up with the demands of the 21st century environment, university libraries are incorporating various concepts to provide the needed services in order to retain their relevance. Social media platforms (SMP) are among the new concepts that libraries are engaging to interact with their teeming users. Social media can be defined as forms of electronic communication through which users interact among their peers in order to create, freely share, exchange and discuss information, ideas, personal messages, and other content about each other and their lives using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos and audio, utilizing online platforms while they are connected to the Internet (Cox and Rethman, 2011). One of the social network platform popularly used by students is the Facebook media. Stephen (2007) indicated that Facebook is most popular among university students and they are the strong factors for its success. It is very helpful in institutional learning (Stephen, 2007). Facebook have become very popular with young people and are commonplace where students easily share information in our institutions.

Facebook media platform have become common place and essential part of daily life for students since its inception. Surprisingly, research on the social media on academic performance of university students has not been given much needed attention. There appear to be conflicting priority of students, parents, and teachers in relation to the social media platform with teachers more concerned about issues such as students' behavior towards their academic performance in class and parents worried about their children's' addiction towards those social media platforms thereby occupying their entire time at home and even at school.

Social network platforms can easily be accessed through the use of computer or mobile phone devices with internet connectivity. It also uses a group of internet-based applications that is built on the technological foundations of Web 2.0 that allows the creation and exchange of user-generated contents (Mayer and Mereno, 2003). Social media platform is used as a means of interactions among students in which they share and exchange information in virtual communities and networks amongst university peers (Blum stock and Eagle, 2010)

The utilization of social media platform is promoting library services towards a newer dimension. In promoting library services, social media platforms if properly used can increase the value in the library, education of users on new stocks in the library and changes the behavior and perceptions of users about the library. Libraries desiring to connect constantly with their clients increase users' satisfaction and this is done through the promotion and presence of social media platforms like YouTube, Blog, etc. for service delivery. According to Ezeani 2011, should make social networking sites on the internet widely known to patrons and encourage library patrons to use them as a medium of promoting library and information resources and services. Social media plat-forms have become a new avenue for libraries to interact with their users and lecturers alike. It is becoming imperative for university libraries in Nigerian tertiary institutions to utilize and promote the library services effectively which would in turn help in the development of the university libraries in general through social media platforms.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The essence of following the new trends in tertiary institutions in Nigeria envisage by the present challenges of the new millennium no doubt requires librarians to follow suit. The academic environment is faced with an ever increasing and rapidly changing atmosphere which has awakened librarians to the new challenges.

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are faced with problem on how to keep up-to-date with the increasing academic demands of users thereby requiring alternate channels on increasing the number of sources of information and information providers such as the internet, World Wide Web (www) and yahoo. While tertiary institutions in developed countries provide free or inexpensive internet access to students, the situation is different in developing countries, particularly in

Nigeria where students' access to internet connectivity is characterised with high cost of internet connectivity, low patronage of internet services, lack of interest in utilizing internet services, attitude towards social media platforms, paucity of well-trained library staff on the utilization of social media platforms, low bandwidth and constant epileptic power supply amongst others and the tertiary institutions in Cross River State is not an exception.

The essence of librarians in providing users with up-to-date information are gradually losing their relevance because of this proliferation of information resources and services. An institution with world class library that is equipped with all the modern library tools, but its library tools are not duly promoted to the public cannot stamp its relevance in this 21st century. Therefore, it was to abridge this gap that this study investigated social medial platforms and its promotion by librarians in Nigerian tertiary institutions in Cross River State.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study was to explore social media platforms and its promotion by librarians in Nigerian tertiary institutions in Cross River State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Determine the types of social media platforms library use in promoting their library resources and services;
2. Find out the extent of social media platforms utilization in promoting their library resources and services;
3. Examine the challenges encountered in utilization of social media platforms in promoting library resources and services.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What types of social media platform do librarians in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State use for promoting their library resources and services?
2. What are the benefits derived from librarians' use of social media platform for promoting library resources and services?
3. What are the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media platforms for promoting library resources and services?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Network platforms (SMFs) like, Facebook, YouTube, Podcast, LinkedIn, Blog, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instant Massage have evolved over the years, many of whom have hinged these social platforms into their day-to-day lives. There

are useful for the promotion of library resources and services and for the speedy collection of feedbacks from library users. Promoting library services with social media helps libraries to not only advocate the library but also brings library users to become library advocates.

In line with this, Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah and Iroze 2013 on the social media tool mostly utilized by the undergraduate shows that Facebook ranked highest (89.2%) in the list of social media utilized by undergraduate. This was closely followed by twitter (46.3%). The study reveals that majority of the undergraduate utilized social media tools to share information with fellow students 57 (65.4%), communication with friends 169(70.4%) and establishing relationship with friends from other institution 143 (59.6%). Kim, Yoo-Lee and Sim 2011 in their study pointed out that as social media are gaining popularity, and some of them seem to be playing an important role as an information source.

Ezeani and Igwesi 2012 observed that with the exponential growth of the use of social media such as the Facebook, MySpace, twitter, YouTube, it is now inevitable that librarians must learn the use of these tools to be able to keep their ever growing and sophisticated patrons. An article by Vucovich, Gordon, Mitchell, and Ennis 2013 also investigated the effectiveness of social media for reaching patrons. To understand the success of these tools for promoting services and resources, the authors conducted a case study of Lester Hill Library's, a university medical library, Facebook page, YouTube profile, and Blog.

Using a combination of statistics and metrics, Vucovich et al. 2013 found that social media profiles are "effective in reaching different user groups in the various online spaces they inhabit". One finding from the study revealed that librarians reported Facebook and other social networking sites as successfully marketing library's services and resources.

Another investigation into the perceptions of academic librarians towards social media is by Chu and Du 2012. The authors surveyed 38 libraries about their librarians' perceptions towards social media usefulness, the factors influencing these libraries' decision to use social media, and the ways libraries engage with patrons through social media. The results indicate that libraries use these tools primarily for publicity and marketing purposes, improving reference services, and "knowledge sharing among staff" (68).

Similar to Vucovich et al. 2013, the librarians surveyed by Chu and Du 2012 reported social

media as very useful for marketing library services, engaging with patrons, and collecting patron comments. For the authors, the findings demonstrated that librarians, as a whole, are becoming more positive towards social media and more engaged with patrons online.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the three Nigerian institutions in Cross River State library. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all professional and paraprofessional staff. The sample size of 300 library staff. The sampling

technique adopted for this study was the purposive and accidental sampling technique. The choice of using purposive and accidental sampling was based on the fact that for purposive, only respondents who are judged to be library staff in these institutions were relevant and chosen while for accidental were only those library staff whom the researcher meets at the point of administering the questionnaires that were chosen. The instrument that was used for this research was a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire designed by the researcher. The validity and reliability of the instrument were properly ascertained.

Table 1
Sample Size

University Libraries	Population(Professional and Paraprofessional librarians)	%
University of Calabar(UNICAL)	142	47.3
Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH)	91	30.3
Federal College of Education, Obubra (FCEO)	67	22.3
Total	300	100

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The research questions raised for this study was answered using the data obtained from field.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What types of social media platform do librarians in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State use for promoting their library resources and services?

Table 2:
Social media types used to promote library and information resources and services

Types of social media	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Undecided		Total		X
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Facebook	12	4	285	95	3	1	-	-	-	-	300	100	3.23
YouTube	44	14.7	59	19.7	15	5	9	3	173	57.7	300	100	1.76
Podcast	5	1.7	-	-	80	26.7	51	17	164	54.7	300	100	1.65
LinkedIn	15	5	173	57.7	59	19.7	44	14.7	9	3	300	100	1.76
Blog	176	58.7	55	18.3	36	12	21	7	12	4	300	100	3.23
WhatsApp	168	56	80	26.7	11	3.7	3	1	38	12.7	300	100	3.01
Twitter	2	0.7	-	-	-	-	9	3	289	96.3	300	100	1.04
Instant Message	102	34	80	26.7	41	13.7	4	1.3	73	24.3	300	100	2.85

Criterion mean = 3.0

The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1. The result reveals that out of the number of the types of social media tools used in promoting library resources and services, Facebook and Blog ($\bar{X} = 3.23$) were used by librarians in the Nigerian' Tertiary Institutions in Cross River State

libraries for promoting library resources and services which have a high mean value than the standard mean. This study is in consonance with that of Akporhonor and Olisa 2015 findings that Blogs and Facebook were significantly used to promote their library resources and services. The

study also corroborates with the findings of Anyanwu, Ossai-Onah and Iroeze 2013, shows that Facebook ranked highest ($\bar{X} = 89.2\%$) in the list of social media utilized.

However, the finding is not at variance with that of Charnigo and Barnett-Ellis (2007), who surveyed the attitude of academic librarians towards Facebook utilization and found that majority could be described as being apathetic.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What are the benefits derived from librarians' use of social media platform for promoting library resources and services?

Table 3:
Benefits derived from librarians' use of social media for promoting library resources and services

Benefit Derived	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Total		\bar{X}
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Provide up-to-date information within the campus	24	8	50	16.7	81	27	87	29	58	19.3	300	100	2.9
Increase Library Usage/ Users	168	56	50	16.7	30	10	16	5.3	36	12	300	100	3.57
Provide Forum for Feedback	84	28	168	56	20	6.7	17	5.7	11	3.6	300	100	3.87
Make Connection to Library Use Easier	170	56.7	101	33.7	11	3.7	3	1	15	5	300	100	4.08
Enhance Two-Way Communication	179	59.7	90	30	9	3	10	3.3	12	4	300	100	4.09
Provide Interactive Collaboration	164	54.7	76	25.3	20	6.7	19	6.3	21	7	300	100	3.77

Criterion mean = 3.0

Table 3 shows the benefit derived from librarian's use of social media platform. These range from the fact that the use of social media form for promoting library resources and services enhances two-way communication ($\bar{X} = 4.09$) and it makes connection to library use easier ($\bar{X} = 4.08$) and Provide Forum for Feedback ($\bar{X} = 3.87$). Other benefits, in order of significance, are use of social media platform provide interactive collaboration ($\bar{X} = 3.77$) and increases library usage/users ($\bar{X} = 3.57$). This is in agreement with the study conducted by Churchill 2009 showed that the use of Weblogs or Blogs (Social Publishing) in education facilitated a useful learning atmosphere. However, majority of the respondents were of the view that librarians' use of social media platforms do provide up-to-date information within the

campus having a standard mean score of ($\bar{X} = 2.9$) which is less than the criterion mean for the study. Conversely, studies have also found a negative impact that social media perform participation has on student academic performance which is in consonance with the present study. In the study of Kirschner and Karpinski 2010, they found a significant negative relationship between Facebook utilization and academic performance. Facebook users reported lower mean GPAs and reported spending fewer hours per week studying on average than Facebook non- users. Also Malancy 2005, found that 8.9% of students in 2000, and 4.4% in 2003, reported that their grades had suffered as a result of too much time spent on the internet as on social media platforms.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: What are the challenges librarians encounter in the use of social media platforms for promoting library resources and services?

TABLE 4

Challenges	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Total		\bar{X}
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	
Lack of awareness	35	11.7	49	16.3	84	28	129	43	3	1	300	100	2.78
Low level of technology penetration	184	61.3	92	30.7	15	5	3	1	6	2	300	100	4.03
Lack of train librarians	3	1	1	0.3	80	26.7	151	50.3	65	21.7	300	100	2.23
Privacy concerns	175	58.3	92	30.7	9	3	-	-	24	8	300	100	4.16
Network problem	184	61.3	100	33.3	3	1	1	0.3	12	4	300	100	3.96

Challenges Librarian Encounter in Using of SMP for Promoting Library Resources & Services

Criterion mean = 3.0

As indicated in table 4, privacy concerns have the majority challenge librarians encounter in their use of social media platforms for promoting library resources and services having the mean score of highest for privacy concerns with 4.16 followed by low level of technology penetration (\bar{X} = 4.03), and Network problem with (\bar{X} = 3.96). The study is in line with the findings conducted by Dwyer (2007), research on exploring the privacy and trust concern in social networking sites. Questions including the concept of trust, network privacy concern, information sharing, and the general use of this site. The study determines the differences between each of the social networking sites Myspace and Facebook. Facebook users' privacy is very intense; they have good satisfaction and trust concern about their privacy.

Lack of trained librarians (\bar{X} =2.23) recorded not significant challenge since the mean score is below the critical mean of 300 for this study.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it could be seen that despite the extent of librarians' knowledge on social media tools, it still leaves much gap to be filled as there are not promoting them to the advantage of their various libraries; rather they are manipulating them for

socialization purposes. There is need for librarians to keep up with the positive pace with the increasing number of information users in the utilization of library resources and services are accelerating. This implies that for librarians in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions libraries in Cross River State to reach out to the teeming information users, librarians must connect better with feedbacks and comply with innovations globally with best practices, using social media platforms to promote library resources and services.

However, challenges such as privacy concern problems, low level of technology penetration and network problems are issues that must be urgently addressed critically if librarians most derive benefit from the use of social media platforms in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions libraries in Cross River State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of the study the following recommendations were made in order to enhance effective use of social media platforms for promoting library resources and services in the library;

1. Social media platforms should be encouraged in Nigerian tertiary institutions libraries through the provision of subsidized internet access to all offices in the library. Management should

collaborate with Nigerian universities commission for the supply of computers to offices with internet subscriptions.

2. Workshops should be organized to educate library staff on the importance of promoting social media platforms as an integral part of library services as it is durable, fast and easy to use.

3. Librarians should be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards the utilization of social media platforms in teaching and learning processes.

REFERENCES

- Anyanwu, E. W., Ossai-Onah, V. O. and Iroeze, P., 2013. Use of social media tools among Nigerian undergraduates in three selected tertiary institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management*, 4(2), 46-51.
- Akporhonor, B. A. and Olisa, F. N., 2015. Librarians' Use of Social Media for Promoting Library and Information Resources and Services in University Libraries in South-South Nigeria. *Information and Knowledge Management*, 5(6), ISSN 2224-5758.
- Blumstock, J. J. and Eagle, N., 2010. *Mobile Divides: Gender, Socioeconomic Status and Mobile Phone Use in Rwanda*. U. C. Berkeley School of Information Berkeley, CA 94720.
- Charnigo, L. and Barnett-Ellis, P., 2007. Checking Out Facebook.com: The Impact of a Digital Trend on Academic Libraries. *Information Technology and Libraries*, 26(1), 23-34.
- Cox, S. and Rethman, P., 2011. The Impact of Social Networking Websites on the Education of Youth. *International Journal of Virtual Communities and Social Networking*, 2(1), 67-79.
- Churchill, D., 2009. Educational applications of Web 2.0: using blogs to support teaching and learning. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 40(1), 179-183.
- Chu, S. K. and Du, H. S., 2012. Social Networking Tools for Academic Libraries. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 45 (1), 6475.doi:10.1177/0961000611434361.
- Dwyer, C., 2007. Digital Relationships in the 'MySpace' Generation: Results From a Qualitative Study. *Proceedings of the 40th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS)*, Hawaii.
- Ezeani, C. N., 2011. Network literacy skills of academic librarians for effective services delivery: The case of University of Nigeria Library System. *Library Philosophy and Practice*. Retrieved 20th June 2017 from <http://uidaho.edu/~mbolin/ezeani.htm>.
- Ezeani, C. N. and Igwesi, U., 2012. Using social media for dynamic library services delivery: The Nigeria experience. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. Available @ <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/814>. Retrieved 20th June 2017.
- Kirschner, P. A. and Karpinski, A. C., 2010. Facebook and academic performance. *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 2(6), 1237-1245.
- Kim, K., Yoo-Lee, E. and Sim, S. J., 2011. Social media as information social: undergraduates use and evaluation behaviour. *ASIST*, October 9 - 13, New Orleans, USA.
- Malancy, G. D., 2005. Student Use of the Internet. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 33(1), 53-66.
- Mayer, R. E. and Moreno, R., 2003. Nine ways to reduce cognitive load in multimedia learning. *Educational Psychologist*, 38, 43-53.
- Stephen, D., 2007. Semantic Networks and social Net-works. *The Learning Organization. Information Technology and Libraries*, 12 (5), 411-422.

Vucovich, L. A., Gordon, V. S., Mitchell, N. and Ennis, L., 2013. Is the Time and Effort Worth It. One Library's Evaluation of Using Social Networking Tools for Outreach. *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, 32 (1), 12–25. doi:10.1080/02763869.2013.749107.

Anyanwu, E. U., Ossai-Onah, V. O. and Iroeze, P., 2013. Use of Social Media Tools Among Nigerian Undergraduates in Three Selected Tertiary Institutions in Imo State, Nigeria. *Journal of information and knowledge management*, 4(2), 46-51.