DIGITAL LIBRARIES AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

Information is the key element in today's world. Data is the heart of any library or any information Centre. Access to Information and data will help each and everyone in leading a quality life. Individuals, researchers, organizations, government, and all others need data or information for several purposes. Libraries are one of the traditional methods for storing and retrieving the information. As Library is a service and non-profit Organization, using their resources and collection of information has become more popular. There is a massive transformation in the functioning of libraries in such a way that everyone can access the data through online with the help of internet from anywhere and anytime. Social media is the most popular means to promote or to market any type of service and library service is not an exception. Social media is playing an important role in promoting the data required in the form of e-books, e-newspapers, e-information. This paper throws light on the transformation of libraries and the role of social media in extending the services of digital libraries. The role of the libraries and the librarians in providing the information to the users through the social media is also discussed in this paper. The advantages and the challenges posed in promoting the library services through the social media are highlighted in the paper.

KEYWORDS: e-Libraries, Information, Data, Social Media, e-Resources, Librarian.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are the systematized collection of books, newsletters, periodicals and consist of various recorded data or information. They provide factual information which helps the users to get the information they require for different purposes. In today's world, the traditional form of libraries has been changed replacing the traditional methods of storing the information with digital information i.e. online databases, CDs etc. Time is the major constraint for today's users of information. Hence the users need information within the time frame. Now days, access to information can be done in a fraction of seconds. There are many reasons for the transformation of libraries such as timely information, improved technology and technological skills, fast and quick retrieval of data etc.

Social Networking is internet enabled services which permit their users to connect, view, and navigate the users who are part of the system where the users are consented to develop their own profiles to exchange their ideas, information, and knowledge among the users of those networking sites. It is the networks where users are connected vide their friendship, working relationship, family, values etc. Social Media is considered as one of the effective modes of transmitting, communication information. When this is being used as part of the libraries, then it is one of the cheapest modes of transmitting information about the library, collection details, meetings, art exhibitions, arrival of new sources of data etc.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To explore various types of social media in the area of library and information centre.
- To study the role of social media in promoting academic libraries.
- To identify the skills required by the librarian in managing the digital libraries.
- To identify the challenges encountered due to the interaction of social media in providing the information.

METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

This paper is based on the secondary sources extracted from the articles, newspapers, papers presented in various conferences.

CHANGING STRUCTURE OF TRADITIONAL LIBRARIES TO DIGITAL LIBRARIES

Traditional libraries are being replaced with Digital / Virtual / Electronic libraries. Digital era has brought many changes in library services. Providing the required data is the major objective

any library or information centre. The traditional card catalog has become paperless and has been replaced with OPAC. Majority of the users are searching the information from their laptops and using e-Books, and at times using paid services also. Libraries are being accessible from multiple sources which made the users more convenient. The role of a librarian has been changed to a greater extent. It has become more unique and challenging. Earlier to use or take information, the users need to travel and must sit physically but now the information is open accessed which can be retrieved from any location. Thus enabling the libraries hassle free usage of information. This is due to technological advancements in the area of information dissemination and with the emergence of social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc. Digital information is progressing at a faster pace and the dependence on library personnel has been declined to a maximum extent. The users are using the information even without interacting with the library staff.

One of the significant changes in the domain of libraries is technological innovations. In near future we find libraries unveiling new and flexible learning technologies. Acquiring these new technologies will make the users to integrate globally and work towards common goals enabling them to use the required information and resources. This growing reach to digital resources will change the status of library professionals. Digitalization of libraries enable the Librarians unlearns new skills to implement the new technologies in maintaining the library resources.

Technology innovations may lead to more effective data management and more effective subject search making digital libraries maintaining more reliable data and resources. These new innovations will enormously improve the way the users discover information more convenient and appropriate to them.

ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN DIGITAL LIBRARIES

Social Media plays a very important role in the functioning of digital libraries. Social media is the favorites pass time for the youth in this digital age. So, Social media can accelerate the usage of digital libraries across the globe. These are the avenues which are promoting open / free access to various knowledge forms. Open Access enables the users to have access to the content without any payment and are permitted to read, copy, download the content. In addition to these, the users should not violate any copyright rules which are stipulated in the open access. The users can collaborate and persist with open access in the online mode where the knowledge is being shared and at the sametime contribute to the development of the content on the web.

The role of social media in maintaining the digital libraries is as follows:

➢ Social media is the most active tool in the process of communication across the world.

➢ The librarians are more acquainted with social media and the related apps wherever they are applicable.

➢ A virtual platform is created by the librarians with the help of Social media to interact with their users.

➢ Librarians are making the Social media as a tool as it is the most powerful weapon to reach the target audience at large.

➢ Statistics to measure the role of social media activities through Google Analytics or Facebook.

➢ In order to promote the digital libraries, the target people should be identified and accordingly the data should be provided to meet their needs and usage.

- ➢ Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WebChat, Instagram, Twitter, Telegram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Pinterest etc. are some of the popular social media networks which are serving as a means to many users in providing the appropriate information required by them.

- ➢ These networks are creating a platform in collaborating and interacting the people across the world.

- ➢ Libraries can utilize facebook to promote their services like they can display the homepage of the libraries as facebook has the largest number of users.

- ➢ Hassle free posting and information exchange is possible through another important network i.e., Twitter which can act as powerful platform in promoting the library services.

- ➢ Blogging and blog is another network which provides the data in a chronological order almost replicating as online journal.

- ➢ The most visited site is YouTube where a librarian can share or upload any sort of information required to reach a greater audience within short span of time.

- ➢ The largest professional network is LinkedIn, which is the best platform to interact with different professionals who need information or data for their academic and research purposes.

Source: https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research.
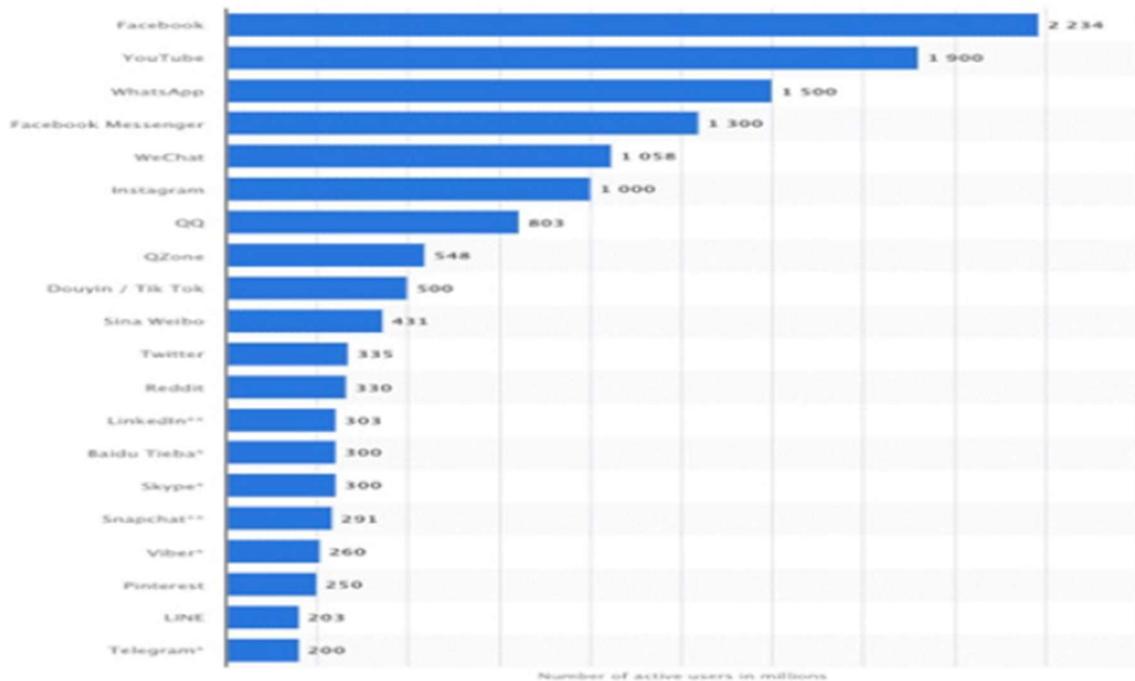
There are several issues and problems in promoting library services through social media networks like training of library staff, government or authority supports copyright issues. Furthermore more, these issues should be resolved until the librarians cannot use social media for the promotion of library sources and services.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND LIBRARY SERVICES

- User requirements can be easily accessed and can provide the data accordingly as two way interaction exists now.

- Helps in getting feedback instantly from the users which helps to act accordingly as per the needs of the users.

- Increase in the number of users and usage of library services.

- Libraries can promote or advertise their services at very low cost as it is very economical to join the social media networks.

- Mutual cooperation among the libraries is possible as they connect through social media very easily.

- Users can get the recent updated information from the libraries.

ISSUES RELATED TO DIGITAL LIBRARIES

There are many hurdles which encounter by the libraries for using social media.

- Lack of Comprehensive knowledge of social media and networks.

- Confidentiality cannot be maintained leading to loss of privacy.

- Lack of funding for the libraries to make use of social networks.

- Lack of specialized employees with technical skills.

- Lack of interest on the part of librarians to use these technologies.

- Lack of proper training for the library professionals.

- Poor connectivity is another problem.

ROLE OF LIBRARIAN

Libraries are pivotal in enabling access to information and knowledge essential for the research activities. With the advent of new technologies in the sphere of the libraries paved the path for transformation of the traditional unidirectional library services to a multidimensional communication which created a more vibrant communication environment and enabled the collective knowledge creation environment for the users. In order to cater the changing needs of the users in these socially networked environments, the libraries need to be proactive in adapting to the new technologies and withstand the challenges during the process.

With the changing needs of the users, the libraries need to adapt to the innovative modes of reaching their users and one of its kind is the adoption of the social networking. With the advancements of the technologies, it is essential for the digital libraries to connect to the social media by linking their websites, library catalogue to the social media, calendar of events, eminent persons of their department, details of research guides, list of publications, latest news which are of use to the information seekers etc. As part of this process, the librarians need to understand the process of creating the content and hosting them on the social media platforms, creating online database, creating social network space, helping the users to acquire the desired skills in procuring the information from various sources, evaluating and applying information, providing enhanced library services through social media.

Librarians are active in their interaction with the peers as well as with the patrons so that their information needs are being met through active participation in the social networks where they tend to expand their part in the content creation, usage of the content and sharing the content. The mode of approach adopted by the librarians in this process does have an impact on the image of the library along with their offered services and the staff involved in the process. Librarians should post the events of their library in the social media and also have regular and continuous conversations on the social networking sites by offering advices to the users, availability of the resources with them or source of availability etc which will enhance the image of the librarians and the library in the process. The significant and eminent people of their stream and their events etc needs to be publicized in the social media to grab the attention of the information seekers. All these efforts are initiated by the librarians to popularize their services and also to be user friendly in their operations and activities.

Some of the significant roles to be played by the librarians in connecting to the social networking sites include: identification of the information needs of the users and suggest or provide solutions to them by providing the required information, identification of the user profiles which match to the available collection of the library, create awareness and share the views to the information seekers present on various social networking sites, identify the prospective users who have a common interest or information requirements, need to have effective user contact management which enables to combine the ideas from different information seeker groups, should posses diversified knowledge which enables them to connect different information as per the user profiles, need to be participative which provides an opportunity to be part of developing the knowledge rather than mere passage of information, need to be updated which helps in educating the users towards accessing knowledge content, provides an opportunity to develop a team with the experts and peers which paves the path for fruitful knowledge sharing, need to provide enthusiasm among the users in utilizing these services for better information sharing and knowledge creation.

CONCLUSION

Libraries have a vital role in disseminating the information across the world. Technology made the libraries more techno savvy reaching the users spread across the globe. Digital libraries are integrating the world by providing required and needy information extensively. In promoting the

libraries, social media is also contributing to a greater extent by providing the best tool to reach library users where they can share and receive their information without any trouble.

Additionally, social media is influencing the libraries to a large extent. Library Information Science professionals are acquainted with social media networks creating a flexible environment to reach potential library users. Several social media brings all the library users community together on one spot to share their ideas and views about their relevant and specific information. Furthermore, social media is providing massive space to the library professionals to create a virtual environment to enhance the library service providing capacity. Social media would play an important role to change the role and responsibilities of the librarians what we called today Cyprian. It would be suggested that every librarian has to apply social media to promote their sources and services. Despite the existence of the disadvantages in implementing the social media in the promotion of the library services, the professionals need to focus on the implementation as this has a larger presence and reach larger segments of the users.

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