

Social Networking as a Tool for Library Services and Knowledge Management in Academic Libraries in Nigeria

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Abstract

The advent of social networking tools has brought new opportunities in the ways information generation, processing and dissemination. It has provided avenue for communication in a more interactive ways. Its application in libraries has transformed the method of providing services to users in the present age that is driven by Information and Communication Technology (ICT). This conceptual paper critically describes application of social networking tools such as Twitter Facebook, YouTube etc. in academic libraries. It discusses types of social networking, its features and historical background. The paper examines the benefits and challenges of social networking such as technophobia and low internet bandwidth. Recent growth in ICT indicates that social networking has under gone a dramatic development in recent years. Such networks offer appropriate space to promptly share multimedia information between individuals and their peers in the social graphs. The paper suggests more training on ICT applications for librarians and library users to alleviate technophobia. Also, an upgrade of Internet bandwidth to support effective application of social networking tools in the services of library should be implemented. The paper concludes that libraries are under the influence of social media networking, which have transformed the functional activities in library services and knowledge management.

Keywords: Academic Libraries, Libraries services, Knowledge management, Social networking, ICT.

1.0 Introduction

Nowadays social networking is a new term that evolves in the 21st Century. The social and communication configuration of our society are being lifted by the emergence of social networking services and products such as YouTube, What Sapp, Twitter, Facebook, Bloggers, Flickr etc. Indisputably, this development has enormous influence on various aspects of services and knowledge management in our academic libraries. Social networking as a term is new, but the ideas behind it such as collaborating, sharing and disseminating knowledge with others have been around as long as man exists. A social networking site may also be known as a social website or a social media tool or a social networking website. It is striving to give explicit definition of the term social media. Boyd and Ellison (2007) defined social network site as networked communication platform in which participants;

- have uniquely identifiable profiles that consist of user-supplied content, content provided by other users , and /or system-produced data;
- can publicly articulate connections that can be viewed and traversed by others, and

- can consume, produce, and or interact with streams of users' generated content provided by their connection on the site.

Social networking site could be described as a medium for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media support the democratization of knowledge and information and transform people from content consumers to content producers (Wikipedia, 2010).

The knowledge management in the academic library is about behavior and services such as document explanation, indexing and classification performed in libraries or information centres. These library services include library database, referral service, bibliographic verification, current awareness service, selective dissemination of information, and document delivery. As a learning organization, libraries especially academic libraries provide a strong leadership in knowledge management. Knowledge Management is the process of capturing, developing, sharing, and effectively using organizational knowledge. These activities in knowledge management are the key objectives in the field of librarianship. Librarianship is a discipline which deals with the collection, organization and dissemination of recorded or explicit knowledge which is the prime focus of academic libraries. Several studies (Martin et al., 2018; Nowel et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2014; Chai & Kim, 2010) reported that there are huge applications of social networking in library services. In line with the assertion of high usage of social networking in the library services, Onuoha, (2013) reiterated that libraries in the world over, are increasingly adopting social media to design services that allow them to reach users easily unlike before, in the virtual space.

Academic libraries are the libraries that are available and established by tertiary institutions to support learning, teaching and research. The most important mission of academic libraries is to expand the access of knowledge for their users. In support of this mission, Patel et al.(2013) reiterated that libraries should aim their knowledge management goal high. There are various examples of what libraries can do to improve their knowledge management in all key areas of library services such as referral and interlibrary loan services, delivery of materials to a user computer desktop in digital form etc. These libraries services could be enhanced with the application of social networking tools. Much as scholars have identified various benefits of social networking in organiz BNBBBations including libraries, there is still need to examine the application of social networking on library services and knowledge management.

2.0 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine social media networking as a tool for knowledge management in academic libraries. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the various types of social media in academic libraries in Nigeria;
2. explore the ways in which social networking can be used for library services and knowledge management and
3. identify the challenges of social networking applications in academic libraries for knowledge management in Nigeria.

3.0 Review of Related Literature

Social media has a variety of broad definitions, such as “united online applications and technologies which facilitate and encourage sharing, exchange openness, creation and socialization amongst a district of users” (Bowley, 2009:15). According to Storey, Treude, Deursen and Cheng (2010) social media are web-based tools and practices enabling participation and collaboration based on persons' activities. Social media use social network as a platform for effective sharing and communication of information. Vuori (2011) characterizes social media by considering the extent to which they support communication, collaboration, connecting, completing and combining-5C (Jalonen, 2014). Social networking site (SNS) could be described as any website designed to allow multiple users to publish content of themselves

(Computing Dictionary, 2011). Therefore, social media could be described as a communication forum that allows users to electronically disseminate information and share knowledge with each other.

Social media networks are platforms that expedite the building of social relationships among people of different races. To better understand the potential of social media and its effectiveness at driving transformational change, it is important to review the relevant literature in social media. Van Zyl (2009) examined the effectiveness of social networks in organizations. This research also aimed to educate IT, business decision makers, knowledge workers and librarians about the various applications, benefits and risks associated with social networking. The findings showed that applying this type of web 2.0 tools in the organization will help people to help each other to engage in knowledge management. Anbari (2010) assessed the specialized Farsi online social networks and its role in knowledge management and providing an appropriate model. The findings revealed that performance of internal networks in satisfying the needs of users, encouraging them to participate in knowledge sharing, attracting trust and confidence of users and effectiveness in improving levels of specialized knowledge. Wang and Wei (2011) in their study titled "knowledge sharing in wiki community: an experimental study" investigated the role of wiki tools in knowledge sharing. The findings showed that wiki tools have a positive effect on the sharing of knowledge among members of the research community.

Social media play a key role in the globalization of education as they give institutional libraries a chance to reach students around the globe. Tripathi and Kumar(2010) examined the use of social network in libraries of higher education institutions across different social and education culture. The findings revealed that social network has the capacity to improve library services to the users. Opeke and Onuoha(2013) examined the librarians' use of social networking for professional development in Nigeria using survey design approach. The study concluded that librarians usually rely on social media as a means of professional development. In general, with regards to reviewed studies, it seems that social interactive media tools have been effective in the process of sharing knowledge among the people such as librarians and other stakeholders. Furthermore, Amuda and Tella (2017) investigated the application of social media used for innovative library services by university library staff in South-Western Nigeria. The findings revealed that social media application to library services is now prominent among university library staff in South-Western Nigeria.

4.0 Methodology

The paper is based on a review. The review was done through the search and review of extant literature on the key words of the research topic. In order to ensure that all concepts were included within social media, the researchers used the following general related terms as core keywords for all literature searches "social networking" combined with any of the following terms; media, tool, site, application, benefits and challenges. Google Scholar, Google Search and other notable databases were searched using the keywords. Also, researchers conducted literature search using online databases (Science direct, Ebscohost, Emerald, and Africa Journals Online) available at University of Ilorin e-Library to retrieve journal articles in social media. The review was also situated in a notable but related theory.

5.0 Social Networking and Its Application in Academic Libraries

The library professionals may use the social networking sites in three broad activities in the Library and Information centres. Social networks can be used to promote academic library services through information sharing, information dissemination and knowledge management. Social network advertising has potential to be a cost-effective means of marketing academic libraries services (Islam & Habiba, 2015). According to Mentzas et al. (2007) the new ways of inspiring and exploit knowledge sharing are forcing organizations to expand their knowledge sharing technology and practice. In support of this assertion by

Mentzas et al. (2007), the Table 1 briefly explains social networking tool for information sharing and dissemination in the library settings.

Table1: Social Networking Tools for Information Sharing and Dissemination

Social Media Tools	Launched Date	Functions
Facebook	February, 2004	It can be frequently used by students for marketing library services and information services in various ways (Potter, 2011).
Linked in	May, 2003	It can be used by stakeholders to get library users connected with people that can assist them find information.
Skype	August, 2003	It is instant message service, which can prop up the instant communication across national borders
Google Docs	February, 2007	It allows sharing of the documents without transfer them via e-mails by using connecting only the link of the document.
Weblog	2002	It can be used for sharing and accessing information by librarians, promotes library services such as acquisitions, opening hours, programmes and other library events (Ekoja, 2011).
You Tube	2005	Library can use it for sharing audio-visual collections; disseminate their video, conferences and workshops events.
Google-plus	28 th June, 2011	Library can use this powerful tool to host video. It allows conversation with library users.
Twitter	15 th July, 2006	A micro-blogging application used for updating collections, new arrival, current content services, enable users to read and send short messages of (140character). It can also be used to create library service alerts (Ezeani & Igwe, 2012).
Pinterest	2011	Libraries build up their digital collections.
Flickr	February, 2004	It can be used as an image distribution tool by librarian for the sharing of new image collections to users.
Instagram	October, 2010	It allows users to upload, edit and share photos.
Tumblr	February, 2007	It helps users to discover new people to chat with on mobile devices. Sharing information about libraries and librarianship with users.
Vine	June, 2012	A short form of video sharing service that can be used to share video on other services such as twitter and Facebook.
Meetme(formerly my Yearbook)	2005	It can be used as a mobile device tool for chatting with different people.
Meet up	12 th June, 2002	It can be used as offline for group meetings in various localities.
Tagged	October, 2004	It allows members to browse the profile of any other members.
Wikipedias “blogger”	2006	A discussion or informational site published on www used to make connections with clients.
WhatsApp	2009	It is recent and user-friendly that promotes cross- platform messaging application. It gives room to exchange messages without fees among users-(Chan, 2013).
MySpace	2004	It allows users to make friend, talk online and share resources.
Digg	2004	It is mainly for discovering and sharing websites. This platform digs for good information and issue breaking news.

Review Literature, 2018

5.1 Social Networking for Knowledge Management

According to Pratibha and Gulshan(2016), social networking tools are mechanistic approaches to knowledge management which are characterized by the application of technology and resources. The ICT tools especially social media are useful for numerous activities in the academic library that are being handled with computer system and professionals. For examples:

- **Library Thing:** It is a social cataloguing networking that is meant for librarians. This can be used along with Amazon, Library of Congress and many other libraries around the world for the cataloguing exercise.
- **aNobii:** This site meant for sharing reviews and communications. It helps book lovers to share their proposals and views. In addition, it can be used for library activities like preparation of due date alerts, lending and discussions.
- **Connotea:** It serves as a reference tool that promotes saving and organising reference links and for sharing among information users.
- **Netvibes:** This blog is used to create public web page for displaying of useful internet resources, news of new arrivals and other library activities.

5.2 Social Networking Features

Kim and Hastak(2018) carried out study on social network and identified various characteristics of online social network. This informs the researchers to examine the features that differentiate a social networking from a regular Website. Some of these features are:

- User-friendly
- Collaborative nature (Interactive)
- Community-driven
- Relationships builder
- Emotion over content

6.0 Benefits of Social Media Networking (SMN) In Academic Libraries

There are enormous benefits associated with the application of Social Media Networking (SMN) in academic libraries as supported by Dankowski (2013). The benefits are listed:

- SMN assists to share and discuss information among others, no need for patrons to visit library.
- It helps to reach the library patrons as well as patrons can reach library easily from their home or working place.
- SMN is useful for an effective marketing and promoting library services.
- It helps to create social groups, like library forums, groups, events and listings.
- SMN is one of the low cost and most useful ways to create and promote library activities.
- It allows users to have online profiles, especially for Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) service and invite friends.
- It helps patrons to locate the library resources (for print as well as digital resources).
- SMS allows patrons to be visible to others libraries or maintained connection with other users
- Some SMNs allow chatting and video conferencing
- SMN enhances real time interaction
- It aids librarian to inform users of the new arrivals

7.0 Challenges of Using Social Media Networking

Several studies (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kietzman & Kristopher, 2011; Sanusi et al., 2014) reported that social media are facing various challenges. For instance, Sanusi et al. (2014) reported that Nigeria, like many Third World countries constantly battle outage of power which affects access to information by users through these social sites, the unavailability of power supply has always had a devastating effect on the desire to source for information. Other challenges of social media networking are summarized as:

- Inadequate awareness: Most librarians in the developing countries like Nigeria do not have sufficient awareness of social networking services, even the few that are aware are still struggling to find out the productive applications of social media for library services.
- Internet Bandwidth Problem: Most institutions have limited internet bandwidth to support social media applications. Poor connectivity can frustrate online participation.
- Technophobia: Many librarians and users are afraid of handling computers. They make the traditional library services their comfort zone and are not eager to embrace and use social networking tools. Also, level of interest and skills with use of social media contrast extremely across library staff.
- Inadequate training of staff: the technological knowledge to provide access to online materials is not sufficient.
- Maintenance culture: Inadequate funds to maintain the available social media tools and for more advanced social media applications.
- Copyright: There are challenges that has to do with copyright while using social media such as YouTube to build library collections (Kumar et al., 2013)
- Government policy: Government limitations on the use of social media may limit access. For example, Nigeria Government goes against use of social media to promote hate speech.
- Social culture: Librarian may face challenge in using an informal but respectable attitude, or deliver social media content in a bilingual or multilingual region.
- Substantial time: Successful application of social media in library services require considerable time dedication from library professionals

8.0 Implication

As societies rapidly develop into knowledge-based information economies, social media becomes an essential driver of both information access and economic competitiveness. The proliferation of social media use in our everyday lives has changed the way in which people socialise and organization like library render their services to information users. Fluency in the usage of social media should become a central pillar of university libraries, both implicitly in how information is access and explicitly in dissemination of information to users.

Knowledge management would amount to individual and organisation change which will contribute to identifying and supporting of university mission and vision towards achieving learning, teaching and research. Thus, strengthen the sustainable development of university education. This study contributes to knowledge by expansion of the literature based on applications of social media to library services.

9.0 Recommendations

- University libraries should upgrade their Internet bandwidth to support effective application of social media in library activities. This is necessary because poor connectivity can frustrate effective online participation.
- Successful application of social networking tools in University libraries can only be sustained through good maintenance culture. The few available technologies should be maintained

regularly because moribund conditions of technology may not support remote access to information.

- More training on ICT applications should be organized by the library management to minimize or alleviate technophobia issue among librarians and library users.
- Copyright Management should brace up with new approach to forestall people from the act of copy, paste and edit without proper acknowledgment of the originator /authority.

10.0 Conclusion

Continue adoption and use of social networking as a tool for library services and knowledge management by both orthodox libraries and users will save productive time to provide and search for library materials. Similarly, application of social media improves access to various books and non-books available in libraries. The older concept says “Human are Social Animals” now the new concept will be “Human are Social Networking Animals”. People are gainfully addicted to social networking from seeking for information to avail the best library services and knowledge management. It is up to the library professionals to continue adjusting and upgrading themselves to the social media networking application for the advancement of their profession and as well as the services rendered to modern day library users.

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