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Mark Quaye Affum
Borsah Library Complex, Cape
Coast Technical University,
Cape Coast, Ghana

How the library and information workers are taking advantage of social network to perform efficiently and effectively

Mark Quaye Affum

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Abstract

Libraries took the advantage to get closer to their users when social media became prolific. Now most major libraries especially academic ones have pages on various social networks including Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, Whatsapp, Twitter etc.

There is a lot collaboration between library workers from different libraries with students, lecturers, teachers, patron, other library users and workers from different libraries sharing information of mutual benefit. In issues of research, conferences, workshops, seminars etc., there can be close collaboration, gathering of materials and information all through the use of social media.

Though the social media is an unofficial way of communication, it has become a very strong and effective network of disseminating information to intended audience.

It is recommended that social network can be official with regards to the use of it for collaboration and information sharing for the library.

The future holds big opportunities for the library in using the social media for other useful services. Apart from the sharing of information. It can also be used to lend soft books and other soft library materials. It can be used as platform for library workers to discuss their challenges, advice themselves and solve other pressing issues regarding the library.

Keywords: Facebook, Instagram, Flickr, Whatsapp, Twitter etc.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background study

The Social media has come to stay. It has now become one of the commonest an easiest way to communicate with the society at a distance with either text, image, animation or video. Sending information regarding a particular purpose has been very easy with the use of social media such as Interest, Whatsapp, Facebook, and YouTube, twitter etc. the library has now taken advantage of this resource to popularize its activities, resources etc. using this medium. Social network is the term that refers to a process of relationship building among a group of people who have a common interest (What is Social Networking, 2010). The library in essence is a collection and books and information that is being patronized or borrowed for use by members or patrons.

Social network such as Facebook, Whatsapp, and Instagram has gained popularity and still attracting more users. It is not surprising that social network users can patronize the library anytime and at any place of choice. The primary use of the network is to build relationship among groups of people, because of this it has become a very easy way of exposing the library to the general public, the globe as well as users and members of the library community.

A social media such as Facebook has a means of exposing or advertising the library to new members of other groups. This is one of the essential uses of the media. It is an everyday use. It is estimated that the Facebook for instance is used by over one billion people every day. This implies that everyday a social media user come across the library.

1.2 Statement of Problem: The social media has now become the primary medium of sharing unofficial information though it can officially be used as well depending on the audience or the participating members.

In the information industry, the social media has become means of communication salient information to members of a particular group such as librarians etc.

Corresponding Author:
Mark Quaye Affum
Borsah Library Complex, Cape
Coast Technical University,
Cape Coast, Ghana

It becomes very easy for members to communicate using such media (Facebook, Pinterest, Whatsapp, YouTube) since it has become widely used.

The campaign for the essence of libraries and dissemination of information in organizations as fallen short of the proposed channels as a result of the numerous information technology devices. In this regard the social media being the commonest form of information outlet is the preferred choice.

The access to information has been costly and difficult of late in this regard, it has become very important for information workers to resort to other cheaper and more flexible ways of communicating to the patrons and other audience. One example of free social network is Facebook, IMO, twitter and Whatsapp. These social networks are free on some telecommunication companies (Tigo and Airtel) in Ghana.

1.3 Objectives

This project deems at promote library events, services, resources/collections at the library, new acquisitions, library guides, exhibition guides, courses. Also to connect with new students joining the university, connect with the wider community beyond the university e.g. the town in which the institution is based, connect with distance learners, with potential students.

To engage with the academic community.

As a customer services tool- complaints, suggestions, enquiries, feedback.

To highlight subject specific information.

The research deems that the challenges of libraries and other information workers could be solved by taking advantage of the various social media available today for visual, audio, textual and audio visual communication.

As a teaching tool to promote information literacy, technology and writing tips (not library based). To update on library refurbishments and as a research tool to locate official documents and studies.

On the order hand other information workers are being introduced to the use of social networks as a more vibrant way of sending information across to their intended audience.

There could be a lot of ways that the social media can be used as a form of information exchange tool in an organization.

1.4 Scope

The project research along all social media available that can be used by the library for it activities such as YouTube, Tumbler, Facebook, twitter, Whatsapp, Pinterest, Instagram, IMO, Viber, etc. These are social media that are capable of showcasing text, image, audio visual, etc.

This project is mainly for all institutions that sends secured Information over network. This research also engulfs around not any libraries but also other organization and all who make use of information. It also exploits other innovative ways that the social media can be used as a prime way of information communication.

1.5 Limitations

The challenges I will encounter during the research are:

- Funding
- Cost of data to access some of the social networks on line

- Access to internet facility
- Access to other information users and organizations

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A number of people have conducted research on information and social networks and media. One known and very comprehensive study is 'Use of social media by the library current practices and future opportunities' by Taylor & Francis Group CC-BY-NC.

This research was conducted on focus groups of some selected librarians in different countries of the world. The research sought response from these various librarians on the effect of usage of social media by them.

2.2 Critique of the existing literature relevant to the study

In the literature review, all the experiments conducted by researcher was basically on social media and the information or the library. the literature 'Value of Social Networking in Libraries and Information Organizations in Asia and Oceania' by S.A.D.H. Namali Suraweera Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, Norhayati Razali Assistant Director, National Book Council of Malaysia, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, Lal Bahadur Chouhan Assistant Librarian, Tribhuvan University Central Library Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal, Neela Tamang Librarian, Central Library of B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences, Dharan, Nepal, Ana Mae Kristine U. Hubilla School Librarian, Don Bosco Technical Institute, Makati City, Philippines, A.R.M. Mano Ratnayake Assistant Librarian, University of Sabaragamuwa, Sri Lanka, Nicholas C. Rubosa Acting Principal Librarian, Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE), R113, Honiara, Solomon Islands, Fairunizan Akbar Malik Librarian, Kolej Disted Library, Penang, Malaysia, Shah Nawaz Mahesar Pakistan looked and 'The Role of Social Networks in the Promotion of Libraries and Cultural Heritage by Breza Šalamon-Cindori National and University Library in Zagreb during the 8th SEEDI Conference, Zagreb all focus on how the library can be efficiently run with the use of the social networks and media.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research program will comprise of three focus groups (one to be held with information workers that such as lectures, one with librarians based in the tertiary institutions, and one with patrons and students of an institutional library librarians); in-depth phone interviews; a Whatsapp interviews; on online survey and desk research to identify relevant studies and commentary articles.

3.2 Performance metrics

Information available publically shows that the effectiveness of social media in helping a library engage its users cannot be concluded, although the majority of studies and anecdotal evidence shows that librarians have achieved this to some extent, in some cases very effectively.

The use of social media by librarians biased with respect to gender, age and socio cultural group and geographical location. Social media such as weblogs created by librarians assist in bringing them together to share their experiences

and solving their challenges with regard to librarianship. Library staff who have the required information technology skills to create such tools are proud about it.

Particular projects are successful and its coverage could be an entire country or even the globe thanks to social networks such as weblogs.

To some librarians, using social networks to share knowledge is like opening a new world of communication. A new form of relationship is created among librarians as well as a new way of learning with regards to the technology involved.

Librarians are learning new things every day and they extend it to the localities with the introduction of social networks and they are always excited about it when novel ideas are created. The social media and networks has the ability to shorten the time that solve issues regarding the library.

Most librarians have come to understand the fact that social media and networks is an awesome way to communicate and share knowledge.

Preferred social media by library workers

It is without doubt that Facebook has become the most popular social media globally. It is also the choicest medium of communication for the library worker today though there are other sites. Snap chat has also gained popularity recently. The American library association uses Instagram very often to show case images of events and other activities that goes on within the association.

Whatsapp is another popular media that is even more used than the former (Facebook). It creates a more up and close or personal communication and relationship between users. Academic library workers use this to collaborate and communicate with teachers and lecturers of institutions to acquire books, journals, publications, and magazines, newsletters, past questions for the school or institutions library. Whatsapp has become very relevant in communicating within an institution between knowledge workers. It saves time, effort and a loss of work load is reduced when Whatsapp is employed for communication purposes.

Library workers are able to meet deadline on time. They are able to reach teachers, lecture and their patrons instantly which that application. Other popular social media channels such as twitter, snap chat, Google duo, Viber, IMO, tango, palmchat, messenger, pinterest, etc. are also very beneficial for the work of the library.

Visual social networks

Visual social networks such as Instagram, snap chat, pinterest, gives library worker and management the opportunity to show case their books, new arrivals, events, books weeks, library week celebration pictorially online without any difficulties. This makes it quite easy also to attract new members and old ones as well into the industry. In so doing it enhances customer services and satisfaction. New and old members are able to engage with members and management. Through the visual social media almost all the library collection and its usage can be discovered by prospects.

Teaching and learning using social networks

Online education is very common today partly because of the internet affordability. Some social networks have made

available specific features for instruction and online education to be possible. Some of these features include posting of pdfs, or soft books, videos, images and graphics. There are also live streaming of videos that can also enhance online tutorials.

For some time now it has been very effectiveness for social media to be used for such purposes. A typical example is Whatsapp learning group discussions. Which can be employed to receive instructions from a tutor with platforms that support word documents, portable document files, audio tutorials, video tutorials, images, graphics, png files and videos, etc.

The future of the library through social media

It is very difficult for the researcher to predict since the future of the library will depend on the success of a particular social media. It has recently been found that some social media such as twitter is losing its popularity and members it time due to the fact they the management of the application have not succeed in meeting the ever changing need of the public. Unlike twitter, Facebook for instance is adding new features every now and then and doing away with the older ones in order to enhance its usability.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Results

The results from this study will conclude that though social networks are more informal its efficiency and effectiveness make it a powerful tool in communicating and disseminating information.

When it is taken advantage of by information workers it is of enormous benefit to the dissemination of information and to the solution to many challenges facing the information industry social media is primarily being used by libraries to fulfil marketing objectives. It can also be used a teaching tool by information workers. Promoting the library's collection is one of the results that a library has for using social media.

The library can promote the best of its catalog and the content of the catalog. Social Media channels are effective and efficient in making information more discoverable in the library and for information workers.

Using social networks such as Whatsapp help engage users with highly relevant content. Promotions using social networks exceed expectations and increase borrowing at the library and performance in the work place.

Several studies emphasize the importance of regular social media activity being critical for ensuring user engagement.

Financially the costs of using social media are affordable. Some telecommunication companies even give access to several social media at zero cost. The use of social media does not come with a lot of training as opposed to other software and library applications. Using social media to share information and collaborate with user and the global audience is quiet quicker and gets to the intended audience directly. Its ability to promote the services of the library worker is easier unlike other online promotion media. There is also increase in discussions, online meetings, programs and events with library users. There are more features on many social media that enhance feedback to encourage user services. The use of social media by libraries can help build better connections well beyond the library and other department within the library. Management of various libraries can use the social networks to communicate with

assistant, colleagues and subordinates. An academic library's reputation is much enhanced more broadly when introduced to social media.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the information workers make social networks look more formal so that it will be an accepted worldwide as a medium of communication for them since it is very flexible.

Librarians and other information workers should seek more innovative ways of using the social networks to disseminate knowledge and information.

There are some information workers that make use of videos in their work to communicate. Such entities should adhere to popular social site such as YouTube and Pinterest for information dissemination.

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