

## Research Article

# Application of Social Networking in Library Services

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

The unprecedented technological advancement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, no doubt has impacted on library services globally and also in India. The Social Media hype has gradually crept into the library profession with social sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, Library Thing, etc; it has become evident that our services will need to change to meet the growing needs of our end users.

This paper deals with concept of social networking and its application to Academic library services for a pro-active awareness and training to educate the LIS professional and the Teaching Faculty, Students and Research Scholars on the in valuable importance of utilizing social media in academic library services in digital environment.

**Keywords:** Social Networking Sites, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Academic Library, Library Services

## Introduction

*To continue to be vital to society, libraries must adopt new objectives. In particular, they must strive to participate with individuals in their cultural activities; passive, depersonalized service is no longer enough.*<sup>1</sup>

Federick Kilgour

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a library can be defined as a building or room where books, periodicals and sometimes films and recorded music are kept for the purpose of being borrowed by the public or the members of an institution.<sup>2</sup> The changing technology, explosion of information and the transition of academic libraries from print to electronic have influenced the user behavior. Most of the libraries, especially academic libraries are continued to be hybrid (print and electronic) libraries. Compare to other libraries, academic college libraries need special attention in developing collection, systems and services, keeping the hanging-needs and information seeking behavior of the users.<sup>2</sup>

Social connections have become very important and have improved the library profession tremendously in India. It has some major features like social collaboration, easy surfing, more participation, private messaging can be easily possible by communicating thousands networks, discussion forums, events management, blogging and commenting, media uploading, multimedia enabled, interactive and collaborative learning are some of the important features that we can see in social networking.

## Literature Review

There has been plethora of studies done on social media in libraries, it has been clear that social media plays a vital role in library.

Harjinder Singh (2016) stated in his article focused on application of social networking sites for promotion and marketing library services. He concluded that librarians need to change according to the changing needs of library users and information technology. Librarians should be provided proper training and education for using social media.<sup>3</sup>

Gary Collins and Anabel Quan Haase (2013) in their article studied about the current trends and future challenges in academic libraries. The study examines the adoption rates and usage patterns of various social media in academic libraries. They conclude that engaging patrons through use of social media is very effective and meaningful focused on current trends and future challenges.<sup>4</sup>

Chegoni Ravi Kumar (2015) in his paper studied about the concept of social media and its implication in libraries. The article covers advantages and disadvantages of social media in academic libraries. He concludes that in this technological era, library professionals must have required skills and knowledge to provide right information to right person at right time by using various social networks.<sup>5</sup>

Kadam, Sachin (2014) In his paper stated the purpose of social media in libraries, impact of use of social networking sites and problems in using social networking sites. The author concludes that efficient librarians can engage the patrons to use social networking in today's technological world.<sup>6</sup>

Draper and Turnages (2008) in their article the author stated that blogs and other web tools are becoming more popular to communicate with the students. They undertake survey of 265 academic librarians and conclude that blogs were mainly used for marketing the library services.<sup>7</sup>

### Objectives of the Study

- To study the significance of social media in library science
- To understand the applications of various social networking in academic library

### Research Methodology

The paper is written with sources of data and information from secondary sources viz. books, journals, websites, research papers etc.

### Social Media

Over half of the world's 2 billion internet users interact with social media tools to create, share and exchange information and ideas while online. Social media is fast becoming a regular part of our everyday lives. Its online communities carry a strong and influential voice and there is much to be gained from engaging directly with people through these channels, whether that is to network, promote a product or service or just stay up to date with the latest news.

Social media has become one of the most important parts of our daily life which enables us to communicate with each other. Social media is a great way to protect and build our digital reputations. Social networking tools make it possible for us to be proactive in maintaining, building and protecting your personal brand and help spread word-of-mouth about our books. Social media is very informative, entertaining and

it also aware us about various situations or events which are going on in the society or in the world at large.<sup>8</sup> Social Media facilitates us to also enhance our viewpoints as it enables us certain interactive learning activities also. It is a platform where our creations and thoughts are presented to a huge lot of masses.

### Definitions of Social Media

"Social Media are primarily Internet-based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings."<sup>9</sup>

Wikipedia

"An umbrella term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and the construction of words and pictures."<sup>10</sup>

Anvil Media

### Relation between Social Media and Libraries

Social media has the potential to facilitate much closer relationships between libraries and their patrons. According to the young adult library services association (Yalsa) it is defined as "the software that enables people to connect, collaborate and form virtual communities via the computer and/ or the Internet." For example; sites allow visitors to send emails, post comments, build web content and/or take part in live audio or video chats.

A social networking is an online service, platform or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social networker social relations among people who share interests and activities. Social networking often involves grouping specific individuals or organizations together. Social media provides a quick, low tech method to generate, maintain web based Subject guides and act as communication tools to enable social interaction among LIS Professionals. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet. They interact, share and exchange resources by social networks. It promotes free flow of information and sharing of resources beyond boundaries. Social network media is now main stream.

Libraries are using these tools to market programs and services and to connect and engage with their communities beyond the library walls. Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest as examples of tools that are being used successfully by libraries.

### Significance of Social Media in library

Social media helps to promote library services and disseminates information quickly directly to the end users.

- It helps to rich and increase interactions with library users.
- It enhances communication within library and other department.
- Social media helps to publish library news and press

release

- The cost of using social media in library is low.
- Social media is used as a research tool to locate official document and studies.
- Helpful in building reputation.
- Social media allows creating, connecting, contributing and sharing information.

### Limitations of Social Media

Social media presents a good number of opportunities for libraries, but also has some limitations.

- Social media requires technological expertise.
- There are Copy Right issues in using social media.
- Factors such as internet connectivity, technological infrastructure and government regulations on the use of social media may restrict access.
- There is lack of privacy and identity theft.
- Inadequate library staff and less training opportunities for library staff.

### Applications of Social Networking in Library Service

Many libraries are now-a-days connecting with their users through different social media tools the examples of some libraries using some of the social media tools are:

#### Website

This is the most used part of your online presence. Almost there is no interaction but many users mainly use various websites to collect information. Library websites provides various services and helps to interact with the community. Through their sites they can inform about various services, products, events and courses offered by them.<sup>11</sup> There is least frequency of change. Content changed often only once a month or even more.

#### Blog

Librarians have taken to blogs like ducks to water. One of the best things about blogs is that many blogging programs are either free or inexpensive to use. A great way to learn about blogs is to dive in and set up a free account at a service like Blogger, Onclave or Live Journal and take a test drive. Best used for ongoing services, letting people know about an event, book reviews etc. Blog helps to disseminate information to lots of people at one time update students on new collections, conversing with library staff, blogs are a powerful tool, especially when combined with RSS. Blog promotes library events and programs. Create an online book discussion area by asking readers to recommend books to others, Building New Ties. Authors can allow readers to post their own comments. No web design knowledge is needed to create this. A great library blog requires three ingredients: inspiration, motivation and dedication.<sup>12</sup>

### Facebook

Facebook is librarian friendly. One of the best social media site used by students, staff etc. Group communication among patrons can be possible in web 2.0. Using Facebook can be an effective way for academic libraries to connect with their user community. It can also be used to promote future events and promoting services. By posting updates on Facebook, libraries can inform their users about the library's programs and services. They can invite students to attend training sessions, post practical information about the library's opening times, link to new and existing print and online resources and update the university community about any new developments. 'Followers' can engage with the library by commenting on posts and sharing them with their friends.<sup>13</sup>

### Twitter

Twitter gives special libraries a new opportunity to share information not just with their internal clients but also with people outside the institution who are interested in their topics. Libraries have used Twitter primarily for marketing of services and programs.<sup>14</sup> Best for things which are happening *now* like events but can also be for instant links to local study pictures etc. Most Twitter interaction is immediate – within the first couple of hours—with the "success" of a tweet in terms of re-tweets, favorites and replies often known within minutes. Twitter, a micro blogging application, to keep staff and patrons updated on daily activities, like frequently updated collections, new arrival, current content services of library.

### MySpace

Is an extremely popular social networking site which primarily has a social function allowing people to make friends, talk online and share resources.<sup>15</sup> MySpace to be good outreach tools for an academic library alongside other, older outreach tools.<sup>16</sup>

### Ning

Ning is the perfect social media builder for universities, colleges, Libraries and other educational institutions to establish quality community that will completely change and enrich communication with the students.<sup>17</sup> Librarian can use this tool to get connected with students, Academic library associations and more. Can also useful to share information with many people at a time.

### Meebo

Meebo was also identified as an Instant Messaging chat too. Network and assist students on Meebo, no matter what IM client they use. Online chatting or virtual reference service in library can impact by professionals to clients.

### LinkedIn

This social networking site for professionals is a great way to

get library patrons connected with the people that can help them find information. LinkedIn can be a powerful resource for librarians, both as a tool for career development and as a resource to assist library users. Monitoring emerging library trends and technologies, staying current with LIS thought leaders, Identifying topic experts who are willing to share their expertise etc.<sup>18</sup> LinkedIn as a tool not only benefit individually but also benefit for the users of your library as well.

### **Flickr**

Flickr is best used for uploading, sharing and viewing clear, sharp images as compared to other photo-sharing sites, such as Instagram. Library can share photo collection of workshops; conference and different program that are organized within the campus. Librarians found their way to Flickr and established their own sites- pools related to all things library and librarian; groups that posted images of librarians' desks; and some libraries actually registered their own Pro accounts. Another benefit of using Flickr is tagging photos with your library's name and location. It gets you found in the great pool of all of the photos in Flickr. The site provides many other networking options, such as groups, communities, discussions and a Flickr blog, making this a powerful social networking tool. Flickr also provides easy ways to find great images and use social tagging to manage your finds. Flickr users can also help gather missing information about images.

### **YouTube**

It's also a highly appealing medium for Internet users, who like to share what they watch. Libraries use YouTube videos to promote their library. It is an effective way to communicate messages quickly and clearly. YouTube videos contain representations of libraries, librarians and library patrons. Libraries offer video contests as a way to market their library and engage their patrons in creative ways. Libraries are using YouTube videos to supplement their instruction efforts. Library video and e-learning tutorials, events and others video library services can be effectively promoted and webcast through YouTube.

### **Teacher Tube**

Teacher Tube, which is a YouTube for teachers, presents an excellent opportunity for instructor-librarian collaboration. Instructors can guide students to helpful library resources. It is also used to teach library skills, during library orientation program etc.

### **Wikipedia**

Wikipedia is an online encyclopedia updated by users. It is use to share your knowledge by editing or simply point library patrons in the right direction. You can also host your library websites on wiki software like PBWiki. Students

can be engaged in information literacy through Wikipedia program, library faculty can be engaged in developing best practices for teaching research and information literacy and the public can be engaged through creating access routes to library resources. Wikipedia helps to generate goodwill between librarians and Wikipedia editors.

### **PBWiki**

PBWiki is the world's largest provider of hosted business and educational wikis. It encourages collaboration from students, a way to showcase work and offers a central gathering point for information. PBWiki offers controlled access, so you can give some editing privileges, while others can only read.

### **Micro blog**

Micro blogging is the practice of posting small pieces of digital content which could be text, pictures, links, short videos or other media. Librarians can use these applications for library services, instructional activities and event promotion. It is use to share information, interact with content and generate resources. Micro blogs can provide librarians with many opportunities to build cohorts of professional support and gain access to materials not readily accessible in traditional formats.

### **RSS**

Libraries can use RSS as tools for promoting distance learning. RSS and Blogs can be used to market library services among distance learner. With the help of RSS, libraries can republish and syndicate the contents on the Web. A way for subscribers to automatically receive information from blogs, online newspapers etc.<sup>19</sup>

### **Pin Interest**

Pin interest is a social media website that allows users to create and share virtual bulletin boards. Pin interest provides a way for libraries to interact with the community and provides opportunity for librarians to promote their libraries or sharing ideas. Many librarians are capitalizing on the visual power of Pinterest to show off book covers, especially those from new books, special collections and kid-friendly material. It can be a great way to attract readers to books they might not have otherwise checked out. Some are using the site to capture images and short bios of their employees, so the community can get to know the librarians and what makes them tick. Pinterest can be a great place for librarians to find inspiration for summer reading programs and for parents and kids to keep up with the latest reads, fun integrated projects and much more. Pinterest provides a way for libraries to interact with those in the community, sometimes in very fun and creative ways and to connect to other libraries.



**Social Networking and Tools**

Source: - <http://eprints.rclis.org>

## Instagram

Instagram describes itself as a “simple way to capture and share the world’s moments.” Libraries around the world are using the mobile application to showcase a wide variety of perspectives. Libraries show their spaces, displays, architecture, collections, events, staff and users. The images and videos that appear on a library’s Instagram account tell a collective story of the vital role that the library plays in the community. Instagram helps to share your office or show your librarians in their natural habitat. Sharing pics of library staff is a great way to make librarians seem friendly and ready to assist patrons with their research needs.

## Future of Social Media in Library

Social media is not going away. As new platforms emerge, libraries will need to choose the channels that work for their communities. But whatever platforms they choose, they must have some kind of plan that outlines their goals and embrace philosophies that support interactivity with their communities. By using social media libraries can promote their users, services, resources, events and communication. Libraries should be facilitated with internet service and develop their web page and social media page. In order to grow social media usage trend in libraries, librarians should be trained and educated regarding social media use for marketing library resources and services and all the problems that hinder in social media usage in libraries should be resolved. Social media offers libraries greater outreach opportunities that were never available on such in the past. The two way communication offered by social media will go a long way toward creating dynamic libraries that are evolving in tandem with their users changing needs and expectations.

## Conclusion

Social media is an effective tool helping librarians promote the work of their faculty and connect more deeply with the broader library community. Study concludes that according to the changing needs of library users, libraries need to be changed accordingly and librarians should feel positive about the potential for social media to help increase in engagement between users and library staff and services.

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