

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE LIBRARY

BY

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the concept of social media, Types of social media, how social media can be used in the library, the uses of social media in the library and the types of tools used in a social media. The paper also talked about the voices for the library, it also gave the 2011 library trends, it gave the challenges faced using the social media both locally and internationally and the researches made from other libraries. Recommendations and Conclusions where also given at the end.

INTRODUCTION

The best way to define social media is to break it down. Media is an instrument of communication, like a newspaper or a radio, so social media would be a social instrument of communication.

In Web 2.0 terms, this would be a website that doesn't just give you information, but interacts with you while giving you that information. This interaction can be as simple as asking for your comments or letting you vote on an article, or it can be as complex as Flixster recommending movies to you based on the ratings of other people with similar interests.

Social media -from blogs to wikis to tweets — have become academic media, new means by which scholars communicate, collaborate, and teach. (John Palfrey) Social media is the media that uses information and communication technology (ICT) to establish an on-going social interaction, the ICT could be text, audio or multimedia media.

In fact, many school libraries are devising policies for students and outlining acceptable-use guidelines for blogs and other social media. Schools have a unique set of challenges when it comes to developing such policies as social Web sites are often restricted by the district or blocked altogether.

Many young adults have incorporated social media into their daily practices, both academically and personally. They use these tools to connect, collaborate, communicate and create.

Social media, on the other hand, is a two-way street that gives you the ability to Today's new media tools which are incredibly powerful communication vehicles that allow organizations to connect and engage with many different

audiences. With more than seven million users, Twitter is growing at an annual rate of 1,382 percent, Facebook boasts over 250 million active members, and aspiring writers have started more than 133 million blogs. While the wild popularity of these apps has opened up a world of opportunity for developing brands and building communities, the social and extremely public nature of these services also brings potential hazards. That's why organizations—including libraries—are developing policies on the use of social media for staff and users.

The term "social media" is used somewhat loosely to describe an array of new Web 2.0 platforms, although they are not always clearly distinguished in the literature, the interactivity associated with "social media" should be differentiated from more generalized forms of online user engagement. For instance, many websites invite users to input their own information, customize the layout and look of a page, prioritize certain kinds of content, or keep track of their own online activities over time. Social media, by contrast, is characterized by interactivity across multiple horizontal connections, which produce in aggregate a mutable, collectively generated user experience, even within a single platform, users make use, to varying degrees, of the opportunities afforded for collaboration and social networking. YouTube, for instance, can be used simply as a broadcast medium for propagating a movie trailer or public service ad. It is only when other users begin to link to, remix, repurpose, and discuss posted content that YouTube's character as a social media platform comes fully into view. Think of regular media as a one-way street where you can read a newspaper or listen to a report on television, but you have very limited ability to give your thoughts on the matter.

Uses of social media within IT

"Social networks of the electronic variety have become thoroughly embedded in contemporary culture. People have woven these networks into their daily routines, using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, online gaming environments, and other tools to build and maintain complex webs of professional and personal relationships. CIOs likewise have recognized the importance of building social networks, using not only these electronic tools but also the old-fashioned methods of face-to-face communication and relationship building. Today, establishing these networks is more important than ever in order to manage changes in technology and expectations in the current economy. The communications makeover of IT organizations begins with understanding the higher education landscape and moving inward in concentric circles. IT leaders have long been knowledgeable about higher

education, including government policy, finances, and the competitive outlook; now, the importance of broad generalist knowledge is filtering lower in the organization." Trubitt L. & Overholtzer J. (2009).

RESEARCH

"Social networking sites such as "Facebook" and "MySpace" have been subject to much recent debate within the educational community. Whilst growing numbers of educators celebrate the potential of social networking to engage learners with their studies, others fear that such applications compromise and disrupt young people's engagement with "traditional" education provision. "What impact can Web 2.0 technologies, specifically social networking sites, have inside and outside the classroom? While participation

Within the Facebook community has grown exponentially across college campuses, participation in course specific Web CT discussion forums has not necessarily followed suit. In response to this disparity, Jacob Schroeder and Thomas J. Greenbowe created a Facebook group for Iowa State University students who were enrolled in a one semester undergraduate organic chemistry laboratory, hoping to provide a more dynamic environment for communication among students and the course instructor. A comparison of student usage of the Facebook group with the WebCT discussion forums suggests that students use Facebook more dynamically than they use WebCT's discussion functions." Schroeder, J., & Greenbowe, T. J. (2009).

The millennial generation of students are digital natives coming to higher education with extensive experience in social media. Business and other organizations are expecting their recruits to have high proficiency in these technologies too. The movement to richer media such as video blogs (vlogs) is assessed. Caveats for implementing the social media in higher educational settings are noted." Wankel, C. (2009).

"Virtual worlds, computer based simulated environments in which users interact via avatars, provide an opportunity for the highly realistic enactment of real life activities online. Unlike computer games, which have a pre defined purpose, pay off structure, and action patterns, virtual worlds can leave many of these elements for users to determine. One such world, Second Life (SL), is frequently used as platform for revenue generation, information and knowledge sharing, and learning. As a learning

environment, Second Life appears to be particularly amenable to action learning, where learners are not simply observers, but plan, implement, observe, and draw conclusions from their actions. We tested the usefulness of SL as an action learning environment in a senior course for management information systems students. The findings demonstrate learning in the SL environment contributes to the students' perceived value of learning through the Action Learning steps." Wagner, C., & Ip, R. K. (2009).

Types of Social media

When many think of social media Face book or Twitter may come to mind. But there are hundreds, possibly thousands of social media websites out there. And these sites allow for different types of promotion. But it's good to be familiar with the several types of social media and how they can be used to promote your business.

The most prevalent type of social media, social networking sites that allow users to create a personalized profile or page and connect with other users includes the following:

Facebook – The most visited website on the Internet for one to many communications is the Facebook. Facebook is immensely popular and widely used by people of virtually all age groups. Facebook was launched in 2004. It can be effectively deployed by librarians to enhance higher level and dynamic interaction between librarians and patrons. By creating a page for your business or organization, you can share news, videos, images and other content of interest with users who like Facebook. The other main landing point for our online presence is Facebook. Again Facebook pages are free to create and maintain, though they do take quite a bit of time if you're very active. We now have 2615 likes (which used to be called 'fans') which is fantastic.

Facebook sits in the gap between the website and our twitter account. While there is a fair amount of cross-over in the content, Facebook gives us slightly more freedom for longer links and discussions than twitter, but is more news-y and less in-depth than the website. It also gives users another choice about where they'd like to interact with us.

Twitter – Twitter can be described as a service for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question. With this microblogging site (and we mean micro updates or “tweets” cannot exceed 140 characters) users can join in on the ongoing conversation by posting updates about new products, industry news, company awards and other things of note. Twitter also gives twitterers an opportunity to interact with their fellow which can help build and strengthen relationships.

LinkedIn – Essentially Facebook is for the professional set, LinkedIn allows users to build an online resume for networking purposes. A LinkedIn profile can help you establish yourself as an authority among business-oriented movers and shakers.

Social News

Social news sites allow users to share links to content they find interesting. If a local newspaper features your business in an article or you have a company blog, you can help this potentially intriguing content gain more readers by sharing these links on social news sites such as:

Digg – This is one of the most popular social news sites. Digg allows users to share links as well as photos and videos. Other users can then choose to “digg” articles they like or “bury” articles they don’t like. The articles with the most digs are featured on the front page of the website.

Multimedia

One of the most effective ways to promote your business is through multimedia marketing. In addition to uploading or sharing links to your multimedia content on Facebook, Twitter or social news sites, you can also post on social media sites that cater to one specific medium. Here are a few examples:

YouTube - One of the most popular websites on the Internet. YouTube is the go-to source for millions of users for videos of everything from snippets of the latest Family Guy episode to knitting demonstrations. Posting

and optimizing a how-to video on YouTube not only exposes you to millions of potential viewers, but establishes your business as an authority in a subject, which can help win over customers.

Flickr – As they say, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” If you have terrific images of your products, make sure to share them on image-oriented social media sites such as Flickr, Picasa or Zoomr, Optimize them by adding descriptive captions, tags and alt text.

Scribd – Dubbed the “YouTube of documents,” Scribd allows users to upload Word documents, spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations for sharing. Once uploaded, these documents are embedded into a web page for easy sharing. Also like YouTube, Scribd currently uses Flash but is switching over to HTML 5 so that documents will be viewable on smartphones.

Local

If you're looking to attract area customers to your business, it's absolutely crucial to have an active presence on the social media sites most used in your community in addition to national and global social media websites. With considerably less competition, small- and medium-sized regional businesses have a particularly good shot at attracting new customers on local social media sites, including:

Merchant Circle – Part online business directory and business social network, Merchant Circle is like a tricked-out phone book entry, with their free listing, users can network with customers and other businesses alike and share photos, blog entries and newsletters. For more exposure, Merchant Circle doubles as an inexpensive advertising platform.

Yelp – Combining local search, reviews and social networking into one site, Yelp is fast becoming one of the most popular websites, with 31 million visitors per month. Though local communities tend to be considerably stronger in major cities than in small.

Facebook: An example of the features of the Facebook life.
Sign Up
It's free and always will be.

First Name:

Last Name:

Your Email:

Re-enter Email:

New Password:

I am:

Select Sex:

Birthdate: Month: Day: Year:

Why do I need to provide my birthday?

[Sign Up](#)

What's this?

An error occurred. Please try again.

By clicking Sign Up, you are indicating that you have read and agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy.

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Using social media in the library.

Social media is becoming more and more a must for libraries and many libraries are finding that when used properly it can be a great tool to save money and promote library services and collections.

The Main use of social media in the libraries is engaging the library patron through:

Synchronous and asynchronous feedback in the delivery of library services can enhance significantly, the profile of libraries.

Other uses include:

Active dissemination of notifications

Librarian (reference services, subject, user services interaction with patron)

To create more awareness about the library's programs, events, products and services

Engage, educate and empower users by sharing knowledge that they will appreciate.

Helps to focus on issues that are of value to the clients such that will draw them out.

The following are the list of social media and library trends for the New Year 2011.

1. Mobile applications- This is a big one. Libraries will start using a variety of these; this year including those designed for library websites as well as by library database vendors and other library related mobile applications.

2. QR Codes- These are starting to show up and become popular in the business and marketing worlds and they will start to be used in libraries this year.

3. Google Applications- whether it's collaborating with Google docs, using Google voice for text messaging or any of the other Google applications. Google has a lot to offer libraries and more libraries will start using these.

4. Twitter- While more libraries may be using facebook in many ways, twitter can offer more to libraries especially when it comes to reference and instant answers to questions.

5. Virtual reference- While this is already offered at many libraries, new trends and offerings in the social media world make offering this service more practical than before. Whether it's installing an instant chat application on a facebook fan page, using a live video site such as ustream.tv or one of the many other free applications available through social media, virtual reference is more doable and approachable than it has been in many years.

6. Increased collaboration between librarians at more than one institution as well as between faculty and librarians. Examples include twitter, twiddla, and many other white board and online sharing applications.

7. Teaching social media classes- Teaching social media classes has started in so many libraries this year and with time more libraries will follow suit.

8. Using social media as a teaching tool and not just as a tool for library promotion. New applications by library vendors such as lib guide.

Medium-sized markets, being listed on Yelp can help put one in touch with a young, hip and affluent crowd. However, being listed on Yelp also opens you up to reviews, including negative reviews that can be difficult, if not impossible,

The Voices for the Library

Voices for the Library is a place for anyone who loves and values libraries to share their experiences and stories about what libraries mean to them. The campaign was set up in September 2010 by a group of information professionals who were concerned about the negative and inaccurate coverage of libraries in the media.

Voices started out as a way to provide accurate and impartial information about UK public libraries. But not all of this information was to come from librarians. The name 'Voices for the Library' was chosen carefully – it was meant to be a place where anyone who cares about libraries can make their voices heard. Much of the content comes from library users, who want to share their stories about how libraries have affected their lives.

There are stories from librarians as well. Some are examples of the kind of work they do, to show the range and depth of what trained library staff do, and to illustrate that it's not all stamping books and shushing, some are more theoretical in debates, about the philosophy of public libraries

Types of social media Tools.

We do most of our communicating within the group by email, but there are a number of other tools we can use.

Wiki — wiki can be used for collaborations. Most libraries chose PB works, who offer a free version for individuals/groups and education. They didn't quite fit under 'education', so they fit with the free 'individual' option, which offers all the functionality they require. They can:

- edit pages,
- keep track of who has made changes and when
- see the most recent changes in a list, or have them emailed to them
- have folders and a file structure
- upload files, so they can use it as a filestore

Pbwiki is quick and easy to learn to use.

Some libraries also briefly tried using Google docs, but they just didn't work for VftL. They didn't persist in trying to use them once they noticed they weren't quite right for them, but just moved over completely to the wiki, where they have stayed happily ever since.

Chatzy: Most libraries may only recently had their first face-to-face meeting, but not had online meetings. So Libraries can use 'chatzy', an online service that allows one to create a private online chat room, and have text-based discussions.

Chatzy has been very effective — it shows everyone in a different colour, so you can instantly see who has said what, and it allows you to save the text of your discussion. You need a premium account for the full save/download options, but you can get round this by simply selecting and copying the discussion before you leave the chat room. This makes minuting meetings very easy.

Doodle: If the libraries have meetings, they need to schedule them. So the Doodle can be used as a collaborative scheduler. Doodle can be used for a number of reasons:

- no login/signup required
- you can specify exact times – not just am/pm
- responses can see the responses everyone else has entered. This means that all respondents (not just the admin) can see when other people have said they're available.
- You can also edit the times once you've opened the poll

To-do and tasks: Some libraries use the Task Bin as a group task management system – it allows you to invite other people to see your tasks, and to share tasks with people within a group. However, the use of this never really got off the ground. Nothing wrong with the software, but it might just have been one thing too many for people to check.

Website: the website is built on the Wordpress platform. We use a wordpress.org installation – this is the self-hosted version, which means we have to pay for domain hosting, although the software itself is free. It is possible to have completely free wordpress.com site, by having it hosted on their servers. And the website has been a success. We use Google analytics (again, a free tool) to track usage, and since it was launched in September, we've had over 32,000 unique visitors, with over 108,000 page views.

Other tools:

Delicious: we have a delicious account, and automatically add anything tagged with various tags (pling, voices for the library, etc). These are then tweeted, added to the facebook account, and shown in a widget on the website. This gives us a news feed about library news with a minimum of effort.

Flickr: we have a flickr group, which is a nice visual way to represent the range of things that goes on libraries. Anyone can add to it.

Paper.li – this is a twitter tool that gets a round-up of ‘top stories’ from your twitter stream, and presents them in a magazine format. It’s a nice extra way of pointing people to things they might have missed.

Social media is fast, free and flexible, which is just what we need for a time- and resource-poor project.

How to use social media to promote our school library collection

In this past we will look at a number of tools and strategies, using social media to enhance and sell our collection.

As a gateway to our collection the library catalogue provides information on what is available and where to find it. Now with the advent of Library Thing *for Libraries* our catalogue can take on a whole new dimension with the inclusion of social media content including reader recommendations, tags, virtual shelf browsing, and series / award information. For a yearly subscription fee you can access these features plus more. A novel way to highlight titles and authors is through Kidderlit, a service that Tweets the first line of a random children’s book every morning. You can embed a widget (a graphical interface that displays information) into your school library blog or wiki allowing your students to access Kidderlit directly. By clicking on the line quoted by Kidderlit you can go to Amazon to see which book the line comes from. There are lots of ways to use these tools; it would be great to hear how school library is using social media to promote their collection.

If you want to create your own virtual bookshelf try Shelfari. This site allows you to add your favourite reads, with comments, to your own bookshelf. You can then link your virtual bookshelf to your school library blog or wiki by embedding a widget into your site. This could be a great way to promote new books which you are adding to your collection. For example Springston School Library also includes Shelfari as part of their library blog.

Twitter can be used to promote titles through short postings that highlight different parts of your collection. A really innovative example of this is the John F Kennedy library and museum used Twitter to disseminate updates on President Kennedy's day-to-day activities from 1961 in the White House —

50 years later — by following the JFK Library's historical Twitter feed @Kennedy1961 In the same way, you could tweet short phrases or character profiles from your new titles and link back to your school library blog or wiki from Twitter to encourage staff and students to come in and borrow the items. This is also a great way to create interest from the wider school community including parents it is a gateway to your collection of the library catalogue which provides information on what is available and where to find it.

Challenges of the use of social media

Through social media, the libraries have relied heavily on social media right from the start not just for dissemination, but for collaboration. They have also faced a number of challenges, for which social media was – not just the best, but often the only – solution.

Firstly, the library has geographically dispersed. This means that meeting face-to-face has been basically out of the question. They have never all been in one room together, all the planning, work, collaboration etc, had been done purely virtually and remotely.

The second challenge was that the libraries have no budget, which meant the tools had to be free. Due to some generous sponsors, we now do have a budget – but it's very easy to find vital things to spend it on. This means that the libraries have to carry on findings on free solutions – and most of these come from social media.

The final challenge is that of trying to connect to a huge demographic. Public libraries in the UK are designed to serve the whole community, from babies to pensioners, and often the only thing they have in common is that they use libraries.

Social media is really the only way we currently have of being able to communicate with these disparate groups of people.

RECOMMENDATION

Since The Kashim Ibrahim Library has internet connectivity and a website, they can imbibe the use of social media in their library by posting their collections on the various social media through the site where people can

view their collections and possibly know where those books can be located. This also can be made possible since the retrospective conversion of our books is in progress, the library can liase with the Mac-Athur foundation to help extract our collections and post them on line using cloud computing. The cloud computing allows pools of information to be placed on-line via the server where other users can easily access our collections when on line. The information is placed on the sites as 'cloud'.

Conclusion

Social media is the more dynamic social network for librarians to offer their services and services feedback.

It augurs well for libraries because it motivates us with opportunities to be proactive and innovative.

It engages patrons and librarians alike in a continuing interactive network for mutual satisfaction.

Social media are media for interaction, using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques.

Social media use web-based technologies to transform and broadcast media dialogues.

Social media are primarily internet and mobile based tools for sharing and discussing information among human beings.

Social media is a powerful tool that gives us the ability to send important information to those who need it at any time.

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