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Incorporating Social Media into Library Services: Present Scenario at East West University Library

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Abstract:
In the third millennium, people look forward for ushering the innovations and people's rapport is getting more and more convenient with the growth of social media tools. The usages of social media by libraries encompass a vast array of platforms with many contingencies features containing new ways for library patrons in terms of promoting their information services and products. This paper delineates elaborately the incorporation of social media by East West University Library (EWU, L), Bangladesh as it is one of the precursor academic libraries in Bangladesh where all forms of contemporary technologies and services have been integrating with great importance. This library has been practicing a variety of social media tools, which have been explored from personal observation and practical experiences. The effectiveness of the diversified use of social media tools in academic libraries in order to maximize the usage of library collections and services as well as to fulfill the user's contentment have been figured out from the blended efforts of analyzing different relevant documents as well as the features of existing popular social networking platforms.

Keywords: Social Media, Library Services, East West University Library, Facebook

Prologue:
From the very beginning of human civilization, people have been running after to figure out the effective means and ways of communication to meet their own needs as well as to serve their purposes. Throughout the ages, people have come up with the usages of variety of medium for communication. Saving time is precious for the people of modern era. They have always wanted the medium of communication to be easier and faster. In the past ten-fifteen years, the means and ways of communication have been pushed in a competition to become faster. Under the influence of modern technologies, people are always in a blended mode of communication i.e. real and virtual. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, etc. are the popular platform of social media. When there are much revolutionizes in the world, it is only for human needs and for everyone's sake.

The total population of Asia-Pacific countries are four point one two billion and the internet penetration rate is forty seven percentages whereas active social media users rate is forty percentage and the access rate of social media in Bangladesh fifteen percentage. ("DIGITAL IN ASIA-PACIFIC IN 2017" 2017)

Bangladesh has been experiencing a rapid rise in the number of mobile Internet users. The total number of Mobile Phone subscriptions has reached one hundred forty point
seven one three million at the end of September, 2017 and the total number of Internet Subscribers has reached seventy nine point two two seven million at the end of September, 2017 whereas subscribers has reached thirty one point one four zero million at the end of February, 2012 (BTRC 2017). Therefore, we can distinguish the upliftment of internet connectivity in Bangladesh.

The current population of Bangladesh is one hundred sixty five million three hundred thirty one thousand seven hundred fifty two as of Tuesday, November 21, 2017 and the median age is Twenty six years. ("Bangladesh Population (2017, 2018) - Worldometers" 2017). So, youth is the main lead weapon to transform world. Bangladesh has now forty public and ninety five private universities (“Public and Private University Lists-UGC 2017”) and libraries are acting as imperative hub for students. To engage with virtual world, now libraries are aware of changing their role from physical to virtual by the penetration of different social media.

**Understanding social media:**
Evans (2011) defines social media sites allow users to generate their own content, commonly referred to as user-generated content to share their experiences in many different ways. Social media have been appeared in many forms. Broadly defined, social media allows for the formation of online communities by enabling people to share information, ideas or opinions, messages and videos (Merriam-Webster 2010). Online social media systems have created new ways for individuals to communicate, share information and interact with a wide audience (Palmer 2014). Social networking sites, or social media, are virtual communities where users can create individual profiles and interact with others. (Wegmann, Stodt and Brand 2015). Online social networking sites provide a relatively innovative and potentially convenient way for users to communicate and establish and maintain connections with others based on virtual groups of their choice.

[...] Academic libraries approaches focus more on the student population, including embedded librarians and collaboration with student organizations. Thus, the use of social networking is only the latest example of academic library outreach to students (Dickson and Holley 2010).

Zhu (2016) points out that when social media sites emerged such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Youtube, their features attract libraries for engagement and promotion of information and services to their communities. Academic libraries are increasingly engaged on social media in order to connect with diverse community groups and move beyond the traditional bounds of the library (Harrison, Burress, Velasquez and Schreiner 2017)

The main prospect associated with libraries using social media is identified to be related to its low cost, its ability to take the library service to patrons in their preferred spaces and build a favored community according to its users. Libraries can be the best promoters of their own material by proactively sharing their resources and services
through social media. Libraries should plan to encourage users to share their posting contents for engagement with each others.

Hussain (2012) evaluates social media trends among university students in Pakistan and found that the vast majority of students use Facebook to communicate on academic activities and develop social networks throughout the world and his results show that social media plays a crucial role in the promotion of collaboration and connection of a virtual-educational community. The usage of Social networking tools by libraries in Bangladesh is not at satisfactory level, nevertheless, the culture has been developing gradually e.g. the activities on the Facebook page of EWU Library gained Ten thousand “Like” On August 24, 2016. It was for the first time in Bangladesh for any kind of academic library (Parvin 2017).

As an apex body for providing information for research libraries in Bangladesh having lack of some core social media skills, and in some cases they are far behind users in terms of these skills to engage in the social media revolution.

**East West University Library, Bangladesh; Precursor for innovative ideas in libraries:**

East West University (EWU) is a one of top ranked private universities in Bangladesh. It has established in 1996. At present, the university has three faculties and fifteen departments. There are over three hundred and seventy five faculty members and approximately ten thousand students through a rigorous process of selection (EWU Convocation Brochure 2017). The library of this university is one of the pioneer university libraries in Bangladesh in terms of using the latest technology, professionally skilled workforce, featured resources and services. The library acts as a focal point for students, faculties, researchers as well as staff of the university. It is fully automated having robust collections of books, bound and current print periodicals, e-books, e-journals, national and international magazines, audio-visual materials etc. It has also affluent website with immense information and exposure to those who access it from anywhere in the world.

In addition, the main goal of this library is to promote its services and resources throughout the country. To walk with this goal, library has organized all the subscribed and registered E-Journals and E-Book databases, E-Resources, print journal article index which contains bibliographic information more than seventeen hundreds print articles, open access (OA) database and so on in its website. The EWU Library is the first library in Bangladesh who had commenced the celebration on Open Access (OA) Week. (“Open Access Week Celebrated At East West University Library, Bangladesh - Librarylearningspace.Com" 2017)

**Removing barriers to information:**
The library not only engages with the upliftment of academic resources but also its the Liberation War corner contains a rich collection of books, documentaries, etc. Furthermore, a special section for Liberation War corner has also been taken place on its Website from the very beginning of November 2017. All resources on liberation war has been organized in this section. This effort is the first time in Bangladesh for any kind of library websites. The library has been conducting Information Literacy (IL) programs round the year for students and faculty members. User can sign up for their registration through the library website.

**EWU Library has Implemented the following web based software for smooth and effective services to its community:**

- Koha-Integrated Library Management System
- Green Stone Digital Library Software for building Digital Library
- Dspace for Institutional Repository
- Vufind for discovery tools
- Drupal for Library Website
- Mendeley/RefME/Zotero for Reference and Citation Management
- Zoho for Virtual Reference Services
- My Athens for accessing e-resources remotely

![EWU Library Affluent Website](Picture: 1 East West University Library Affluent Website)
Demonstration of Social Media in East West University Library, Bangladesh

Social Network Window
EWU Library maintains the Facebook page, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and Pinterest as its social network window to provide specialized information services. Through this window anyone, particularly EWU Library user, would get valuable information on different subjects and updates about the Library as well as University. For instance, notices regarding the new arrival of library materials, events, seminars, workshops, library resources and services. Every libraries need to make a plan before beginning the usage of social media. In this circumstance, library's missions are key point for implementing these tools. EWU Library uses the following social media tools to design a market mix for ensuring a significant role in the modern information community:

EWU Library Facebook
EWU Library Facebook page as a forerunner for academic libraries in Bangladesh (Parvin 2017). The total Page Likes is twelve thousand five hundred fifty eight as on 25 July 2019.
EWU Library Twitter
Twitter is a website of social interaction and microblogging, where users can exchange and publish maximum one hundred and forty characters. These messages are called tweets. EWU Library Twitter account acts as another harbinger for academic libraries in Bangladesh.

The power of microblogging for libraries can be huge, if the library personnel execute it in an effective way. Twitter has hashtags which are helpful for those user to find related tweets. Therefore it is superlative idea for libraries to get involved with academic topics or others using hashtags.

EWU Library Google+
“As with any social media product, the potential for Google+ is dependent on the user community to keep it vibrant, relevant, and current” (Anderson and Still 2011). EWU Library Google+ account act as another precursor for academic libraries in Bangladesh.
Parvin (2017) notes that Information Professionals should choose the contemporary social media and other communication tools to provide utmost services to their users. She also elaborates that a wide array of social interactions, one site cannot fulfill patron’s needs and for that reason libraries can use Pinterest for their users. It is a visual bookmarking tool that helps you discover and save creative ideas. It is also called is the world’s catalogue of ideas. EWU Library launched its Pinterest account in June 2016 as a forerunner for academic libraries in Bangladesh.
Libraries practice social media to satisfy a variety of purposes. YouTube can be used by libraries for the promotion, visibility and usage of library services and resources. Libraries can upload videos of local events such as readings competitions, book fair, literature festival and other events related to their interest and assemble into one place like YouTube so that it is easily findable and shareable.
WhatsApp: Instant Reference Service
As we know, the invention of various apps provides libraries more chances to uphold their services for patrons. On 09 August 2017, EWU Library introduced Instant Reference Service using WhatsApp for the first time in Bangladesh on trial basis for providing reference queries to its users. It is a direct and user-friendly service for Library users to contact library personnel. Users may ask about services and resources provided by EWU Library and request information immediately via WhatsApp messages.

Picture: 7 WhatsApp: Instant Reference Service

Social Media integration on EWU library website:
In addition, EWU library executed social media integration to make its content shareable with social share buttons.

Picture: 8 Social Media integration on EWU library
Integrating other social Media with Facebook:
As most adult people are fond of using Facebook, that's why, EWU library embedded other social media in its Facebook page for reaching its patrons effortlessly.

Picture: 9 EWU Library Facebook page with integration of other social media

Barriers to the effective application of these tools:
In Bangladesh, the primary way of social media communication is Facebook. Bangladesh is a land of opportunity for social media because this country has more than 60% of the adult population with the capacity to adopt social media, especially Facebook, and that's why academic libraries need to comprehend social media like Facebook for their patrons (Parvin 2017). Libraries require ample time, teamwork as well as promise from library personnel to maintain various social media tools. It requires technological expertise, for example, handling third party software which add countless functionality to Facebook pages and customizing applications to provide access to online catalogs. Libraries need to arrange training programs for their staff, especially hand-on-training on managing social network and communication skill to increase level of interest in and skills of these tools. There are lack of external factors facing by libraries such as internet connectivity, technological infrastructure that may constrain access. All social media service providers require users to indemnify them from any liability arising from use of their platforms and do not seem to have any means of verifying the integrity, reliability, accuracy, and authenticity of information provided by users. Another serious issue of this social media society is copyright issues. Library personnel who are administering social media tools, she/he must be aware that no
copyright infringement happens and those tools have enough efficiency to secure such issue.

**Epilogue:** People are metaphors of their of habits. If they are comfortable with a particular social media platform, it can be tough for them to change. The same thing is happening with libraries in Bangladesh. If libraries are habituated to use just Facebook then it is difficult to turn around with another social media exploration. Yes it is difficult but not impossible. A long walk needs to establish more social media tools for libraries. However, EWU library has been questioning for the integration of more social media tools, particularly those that brings utmost advantages as per the nature of the library services, and the most effective way out of implementing them simultaneously.

**References**


