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## LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES FOR PROMOTING LIBRARY SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

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# LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS' USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES FOR PROMOTING LIBRARY SERVICES IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

The study determined library professionals' use of social media technologies for promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria. Three research questions guided the study. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 159 registered librarians in university libraries in North East Nigeria. The whole population was used for the study because the size is considered manageable by the researcher. The instrument for data collection is a questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Social Media Technologies" (QSCT). The instrument was face validated by two experts and was trial tested among 10 library professionals in Ahmadu Bello University which was not part of the study but shares similar characteristics with the study area. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. An overall co-efficient value of 0.72 was ascertained for the three clusters. In analyzing the data, mean standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that only Facebook, Blogs and WhatsApp are the types of social media that are used by library professionals in promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria. Also, the finding revealed that out of the numerous types of devices used to access social media sites, only laptop computers, mobile phones and desktop computers were utilized to access social media sites by library professionals in university libraries in North East Nigeria. Finally, the findings revealed that library professionals agreed on the benefits derived from the use of social media for promoting service delivery in university libraries in North East Nigeria. Based on this findings, it was recommended among others that all relevant stakeholders like the Nigerian Library Association, Library schools, Librarians' Registration Council of Nigeria, libraries, etc should assist in creating more awareness on the use and benefits of social media technologies.

**Keywords:** Libraries, Technology, Social Media, Promotion, Library Services

## **Introduction**

The introduction of technology into various sectors of the economy of nations especially education has brought about appreciable level of improvement in peoples' disposition towards new technologies. These dispositions have impacted positively on the modus operandi of professionals in the education sector, to which Library and Information professionals belong. It is expected that clienteles from library professionals have taken a totally new trend. This means that there has been a paradigm shift from manual and cumbersome means of carrying out service provision, to the use of technologies for effective service delivery. That is why Idiegbeyan-ose, Ifijeh, Segun-Adeniran, Fagbohun and Esse (2016) remarked that the use of technology has brought about an obvious increase in the level of efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, in as much as this shift has brought about higher level of effectiveness and efficiency among library professionals, it has also placed more responsibilities on library professionals to be more knowledgeable and savvy in the use of various technologies.

The use of technology has also enhanced various services in the library such as circulation services, reference services, serials management etc. Library professionals can now carry out specialised services such as selective dissemination of information, current awareness services, reservations, etc. through the use of various technologies. Some of the important and creative platforms for libraries and librarians' interactions with their clients are social media technologies.

Social media as a powerful form of technology is a new form of communication and the number of users on popular social media sites is growing at exponential rates. Millions of people are using social media tools as part of their everyday lives for work, studies and play because of its ubiquity. That is why Boyd and Ellison as cited in Kalpana and Pradip (2015) defined social

media as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, to view and navigate their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The strength of the social media lies in their ability to enhance interactions and relationships among people. More so, Trampedach (n.d.) defined social media technology as sites that allow a user to create a profile, set up an account to create a digital representation of themselves; select other members of the site as contacts or connections, communicate and engage with these users which automatically creates a social graph and use an interface (API) to build applications.

The social media refer to the various internet platforms through which social networking is enhanced and sustained. Therefore, the commonest social media used in Nigeria are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, MySpace, Youtube, Instagram, LinkedIn, e-mails among others (Ezeani & Igwesi, 2012). Beyond social networking and relationships, these sites have become major tools for interaction and collaboration among professionals, organizations and their clients or customers. They have also become veritable tools in publicizing, promoting and marketing products and services. Consequently, organizations and professionals have found the use of social media technologies inevitable in the quest for survival in very competitive environments. Libraries and librarians are not left out in this trend.

### **Review of Literature**

Ezeani and Igwesi (2014) observed that Nigerian libraries have begun to engage in social media as tools for rendering services as well as interacting with their users. For instance, Ezeani and Eke (2011) posited that librarians in Nigeria are utilizing social media as tools to offer 'on the spot' library services to users. These services include real time chat with users through whatsapp,

facebook, e-mails and other electronic synchronising platforms. The opportunities and advantages provided by social media have left Nigerian libraries and librarians with no choice than to adopt these tools if they must remain relevant in the 21st century and beyond.

The use of social media technologies among professionals has become a global phenomenon. Librarians in Nigeria as professionals are not left out of this trend. Therefore, social media technologies provide professionals including librarians with numerous benefits and advantages. Broadly speaking, with the introduction of social media technologies into the library services, there are some activities that can be carried out in the library which couldn't have been possible before and all this happens using the internet as a platform; hence Ezeani and Igwesi (2014) noted that social media have become very important and has positively impacted the library profession tremendously in Nigeria. They further posited that through the help of connection of networks, messages in form of text, pictures, audio and video can be transferred between individuals or among people in a group. It is in the same vein that library and information professionals make use of this social media to communicate with clienteles and vice versa.

Library professionals now have a challenge of making themselves more relevant in this digital age. Iwhiwhu, Ruteyan and Eghwubare (2010) noted that the challenge of most librarians is to attract users to the library and to retain them. To deal with this challenge, librarians are re-consolidating, re-shaping, re-designing and re-packaging resources as a means of promoting their services and information in the library. A potent means in which library professionals can optimize for their work and services as well as maintain their relevance is through a medium like social media. In this 21st Century, where a paradigm shift in communicating library services to users is evident, a modern and contemporary tool would be needed to promote library and

information resources services. Social media are one modern and contemporary new media for effective promotion of library and information services in the technological era.

In Nigeria, university libraries have created pages on Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and sites. Libraries, according to Ezeani (2011), should make social networking sites on the internet widely known to patrons and encourage library patrons to use them so as to promote library and information resources and services. Furthermore, studies have suggested that when Nigerians go online (predominantly with their phones) they go basically to social media applications like Facebook, Twitter, blogs and YouTube. Terragon Limited (2013) gave a statistics of social media users in Nigeria as 5,357,500 as at then. This invariably makes social media a must use by librarians in promoting library and information resources and services.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The use of social media technology for library services has gained popularity amongst libraries, information centres and information professionals around the world; perhaps due to changes in Internet technologies, the information seeking behavior of library clientele, and its effectiveness in rendering quality library services. Despite the popularity and ease of use of social media technology, most libraries are faced with a problem of not being familiar with the use of social media technology for promoting library services, restricted opportunity to use, low skills, lack of needed facilities and interest, low interest of library professional in learning and utilizing social media technologies, and internet speed. According to Isiakpona and Adebayo (2011), one major problem facing library professionals as regards social media technology is hinged towards technology related stress; information professionals that make use of social media for a long period of time usually experience this kind of stress. The authors further reiterated that this stress is usually caused by the use of obsolete technology, power fluctuation and slow network. This

stressors in one way or the other has a long way to go in reducing or promoting library services in university libraries. It is upon this backdrop that this study determined library professionals' use of social media technologies in promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to determine the;

1. type of social media library professionals in university libraries in North East Nigeria use for promoting library services.
2. types of devices that library professionals use to access social media sites in university libraries in North East Nigeria.
3. benefits derived from library professionals' use of social media for promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What types of social media do library professionals in university libraries in North East Nigeria use for promoting library services?
2. What types of devices do library professionals use to access social media sites in university libraries in North East Nigeria?
3. What are the benefits derived from library professionals' use of social media for promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria?

## **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 159 registered librarians in university libraries in North East Nigeria. The whole population was used as sample size for the study because the size was considered manageable by the researcher. The instrument for data collection is questionnaire. The rating scale was titled “Questionnaire on Social Media Technologies” (QSCT). The instrument was sub-divided into three clusters. Cluster A contains 12 items on types of social media for promoting library services; cluster B contains 10 items on types of devices used to access social media sites for promoting library services; cluster C contains 7 items on benefits derived from library professionals’ use of social media for promoting library services. The instrument was face validated by two experts, was trial tested among 10 library professionals in Ahmadu Bello University, which is not part of the study but shares similar characteristics with the study area. Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. An overall co-efficient value of 0.72 was ascertained for the three clusters. In analyzing the data, mean standard deviation was used. The criterion mean scores were used as a benchmark for adjudging decision whether they were utilized/Agree or Not utilized/Disagree. Scores below 3.00 were considered as utilized/agreed while mean scores above 3.00 were considered as not utilized/agreed.



## Results

**Research Question one:**What types of social media do library professionals in university libraries in North East Nigeria use for promoting library services?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation scores on the types of social media library professionals used for promoting library services**

Types of social media	X	SD	Remarks
Facebook	3.59	0.82	Utilized
Twitter	2.80	0.99	Not Utilized
Blog	3.66	0.95	Utilized
Youtube	2.10	1.03	Not Utilized
My-Space	2.46	1.07	Not Utilized
LinkedIn	2.88	1.01	Not Utilized
RSS feeds	2.68	0.94	Not Utilized
Mash-up	2.43	0.72	Not Utilized
WhatsApp Platforms	3.38	0.73	Utilized
Flicker	2.33	0.78	Not Utilized
Podcast	2.47	0.78	Not Utilized
Instant Messaging	2.81	0.91	Not Utilized

Data in Table one reveals the item by item analysis of the types of social media library professionals in university libraries in North East Nigeria use for promoting library services. The result revealed that out of the numerous types of social media used for promoting library services, only Facebook, Blogs and Whatsapp platforms with mean scores: 3.59, 3.66 and 3.38 respectively were utilized by library professionals for promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria. This is because they have mean scores higher than the criterion mean. Similarly, the standard deviation scores of 0.72 – 1.07 indicate that the difference between the standard deviation scores were not much, therefore this shows that the items are homogeneous.

**Research Question Two:**What types of devices do library professionals use to access social media sites in university libraries in North East Nigeria?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on Types of Devices used to Access Social Media Sites**

<b>Types of devices used to access social media sites</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Laptop computer	3.20	0.94	Utilized
Mobile phone	3.03	0.99	Utilized
Handheld game consoles	2.62	0.97	Not Utilized
Internet enabled TV	2.36	0.95	Not Utilized
Desktop computers	3.59	0.72	Utilized
Tablets/ I-pads	2.46	0.95	Not Utilized
Palm-tops	2.19	0.84	Not Utilized
Personal Data Assistance	2.61	0.89	Not Utilized
Electronic Note Pad	2.31	1.01	Not Utilized
Kindle Reader	2.45	0.92	Not Utilized

The result presented in Table 2 revealed that out of the numerous types of devices used to access social media sites, only laptop computers, mobile phones and desktop computers with mean scores 3.20, 3.03 and 3.59 respectively were utilized to access social media sites by library professionals in university libraries in North East Nigeria. This is because the mean scores were above the criterion mean scores. Similarly, the standard deviation scores of 0.72 – 1.01 indicate that the difference between the standard deviation scores were not much, therefore this shows that the items are closely related.

**Research Question Three:** What are the benefits derived from library professionals' use of social media for promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria?

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings of use of social media for promoting library services**

<b>Benefits derived from the use of social media for promoting library services</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Saves cost	2.62	0.97	Agree
Builds brand royalty	2.53	1.03	Agree
Enhances two-way communication	2.61	0.89	Agree
Provide forum for feedback	2.52	0.74	Agree
Increase library users/usage	2.71	0.91	Agree
Allows for collaboration for interactivity	2.84	0.87	Agree
Increase income	2.85	0.71	Agree

Table 3 shows the benefits derived from library professionals' use of social media for promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria. The result revealed that all items with mean scores 2.62, 2.53, 2.61, 2.52, 2.71, 2.84 and 2.85 were agreed on. This means that library professionals agreed on the benefits derived from the use of social media for promoting service delivery in university libraries in North East Nigeria. Similarly, the standard deviation scores of 0.71 – 1.03 indicate that the difference between the standard deviation scores were not thus the items are closely related.

## **Discussion**

The findings in research question one revealed that only Facebook, Blogs and Whatsapp are the types of social media that are used by library professionals in promoting library services in university libraries in North East Nigeria. This finding supported the finding of Draper and Turnage (2008) which revealed that blogs was overwhelmingly used to promote library and information resources and services. This finding also agreed with the finding of Akporhonor and Olise (2015) which revealed that for promoting library and information resources, only blogs and Facebook were used by library professionals in university libraries conducted in South-South Nigeria . On the contrary, this finding opposed the finding of Collins and Quan-Haase (2012) as

they found out that twitter was the most commonly utilized social media format used by academic libraries to promote libraries' services in Ontario, Canada.

The finding on research question two revealed that out of the numerous types of devices used to access social media sites, only laptop computers, mobile phones and desktop computers are utilized to access social media sites by library professionals in university libraries in North East Nigeria. This finding is supported the finding of Ogunkunle and Fomsi (2010) which revealed that more than 50% of librarians access social media sites through their smartphones, computers and laptops in Rivers, Nigeria. More so, the finidng aligned with the finding of Idiegbeyan-Ose, Ifijeh, Segun-Adeniran, Fagbohun and Esse (2016) which revealed that majority of the respondents use divers devices to accede social sites, especially, iPad, desktop, laptop, android and blackberry in Ogun State Nigeria, Nigeria.

The finding on research question three revealed that library professionals agreed on the benefits derived from the use of social media for promoting service delivery in university libraries in North East Nigeria. This finding is in line with the finding of Street (2013) which revealed that librarians' use of social media is cost effective and time-effective. The finding agrees with the finding ofAbhijit (2016) which states that it helps libraries to get closer to the users and build a collaborative platforms for the users; being able to get answers to specific questions by using social media.

## **Conclusion**

There is no doubt as revealed by the study that library professionals use Social Media technologies in providing library services in University libraries in North-East, Nigeria. Principally Facebook, Blogs and WhatsApp are the platforms used. Laptop computers, Mobile phones and Desktop computers are the devices used to access social media sites. Benefits are

derived in the use of social media for promoting library services in University libraries in North-East, Nigeria. Among these as revealed by the study include: saves costs; build brand royalty; enhance two way communication; provide forum for feedback, increase library users/usage allows for collaboration for interactivity and increase income.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Library professionals in University libraries in North-East, Nigeria need to increase the frontiers of their social media use in carrying out professional services.
- ii. More social media device other than laptop computers; mobile phone and Desktop computers should be used to provide services such as Electronic Notepad, internet enabled Television Tablets/I-pad and more.

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