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Librarians Use of Social Media in Promoting Effective Library Service Delivery in University Libraries in Edo and Delta States

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By

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Abstract

The paper examined the use of social media for effective library service delivery in university libraries in Edo and Delta States. The researchers adopted descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of 71 librarians from twelve university libraries. Three (3) research questions guided this study. Data was collected using online questionnaire. The total enumerative sampling technique was used for this study. The validity of the instrument was determined by checking the face and content validity and the instrument proved valid because the items in the instrument are appropriate in terms of subject contents. Cronbach Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument and an index of 0.87 was obtained. This shows that the internal consistency of the instrument is high and good. Data was analyzed with descriptive statistics such as frequency count and simple percentage. The findings revealed that majority of the librarians mostly use Facebook and Whatsapp platforms in providing library services. Regarding the library services that are offered/provided using social media, it was discovered that most of the respondents use the social media platforms to create awareness about library resources and services and also to share library news and events. Majority of the respondents indicated that poor internet connection and lack of constant power supply were the two major challenges to the effective use of social media platforms. Based on the findings, the researchers wish to recommend that the library management should provide opportunities for training and retraining of librarians on social media skills and emerging technologies. The school management should also provide adequate internet facilities and improve on electricity supply so that the library staff can enjoy more access to the internet in order to provide effective and efficient services to their users.

Keywords: Social Media Platforms, University Libraries, Library Services, Librarians

Introduction

The university libraries perform an essential role in disseminating information to support teaching, learning and research activities of staff and students. With the advent of the internet, libraries are facing competition from other sources of information. Library user's expectations about library services are changing and they expect so much more from the libraries as well; they want immediate access to the information they need and in the format that best fits how they need to use it (Fought et al., 2014). In this competitive world, university libraries cannot afford to become complacent. If the libraries must stay relevant and continue to provide essential services to students and staff, they need to better communicate the value they add to their users and show how they contribute to the objectives of their institutions. University libraries must adjust to the new paradigm shifts as they strive for survival and sustained relevance (Iwu-James et al., 2020). University libraries in developed countries have long adopted the use of social media platforms in providing the much needed services in order to maintain their relevance. So university libraries in Nigeria could also leverage on these networks to promote information resources and services to online users.

Social media networks are growing rapidly as channels of communication and interaction among students and staff. The major advantages of social media networks are their abilities to establish and build relationships, social interaction and provide more opportunities to reach the library users and give them a chance to interact. University libraries can use the social media platforms to create awareness, promote library resources and services. Using social media in the library effectively enables the librarians to connect with users in a space that they already occupy, while bringing added value to existing activities. It can also be used by librarians to improve student's engagement, create a community of users and enhance the library profile (Guest, 2017). Social media can help increase the awareness and use of library resources and services among targeted user groups and can present a clear, consistent image to students, faculty, and administration as to what the library offers to the life of the university community and validate its continued funding (Smith, 2011). The university library can effectively use the social media to communicate its value and gain advocacy for the library.

Social media platforms can be used by libraries to post insights into specific materials and collections to educate and well as promote resources and services available in the library. This can increase the value of the library, enlighten users on new stocks and changes the perceptions of users about the library (Omini & Ayanlade, 2019). It is also a useful platform for inviting reviews from user group and using the feedback for collection development. It allows patrons to promote program and events of the library by rating, reviewing and sharing with their friends and neighbours. Social media platforms can also extend the library's offering by sharing resources, highlighting upcoming events and providing advice on examination, stress management and employability. It also enables the libraries to stay connected with their users and the rest of the world by creating a collection of the university latest news, research developments and events. University libraries can use the social media platform for effective customer service by implementing an 'ask the librarian' initiative where students can live chat with a librarian who can answer their queries as well as networking with other libraries for this purpose. Online orientation and user training programs can be promoted through these platforms.

The wide acceptability and usage of social media has extended the potentials of university libraries to market themselves and extensively reach out to their users. According to Bakare et al., (2018) this digital era has expanded the tasks of librarians to provide a wide range of resources and services to users that extend beyond the physical walls of the library. Libraries can use social media to promote knowledge delivery, create groups strictly meant for educational purposes and improve e-resources functions by linking students with collective ideas for the purposes of working together (Brien, 2012). It helps libraries to get closer to the users and build a collaborative network with their users. There are several advantages to libraries using social media in marketing, such as informing library users of what resources and services are available, enhancing the visibility of the library, shaping the perception of the library, gaining organizational support, and helping the institution to see the big picture where the library is concerned (Estall & Stephens, 2011). Some of the social networks used by libraries include Facebook, YouTube, Whatsapp, Telegram, Twitter and others.

However, in spite of these possible benefits of the use of use social media in promoting library services, there are a number of challenges militating against the effective utilization of social media

platforms in Nigerian university libraries. Some of the major challenges in our various universities today are epileptic power supply (Adomi, 2007), lack of adequate access to internet services (Awojide, 2020) and lack of awareness among librarians. Arising from this concern, the purpose of the study is to investigate the use of social media in promoting library resources and services in university libraries in Edo and Delta States.

Statement of the Problem

The advent of the internet has brought about the use of different social media platforms in marketing of library resources and services. University libraries in developed countries have long adopted the use of this technology to provide the much needed services in order to maintain their relevance. Therefore, if our university libraries must maintain their relevance in this 21st century, they must adapt to this changing environments by incorporating different social media platforms in order to promote their resources and services to their users. With the use of Social media, there are more prospects of getting in touch with the library community and users so as to give them a chance to interact with the library. However, it is on this note that this study seeks to investigate the use of social media for effective library service delivery in university libraries in Edo and Delta States.

Objective to the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the use of social media in performing library services in Nigeria. The specific objectives to the study are:

- To determine the social media tools used by library personnel
- To examine the library services offered/provided using social media by library personnel
- To ascertain the challenges to the effective use of social media among library personnel

Research Questions

- What are the social media platforms used by library personnel?
- What are the library services offered/provided by librarians using social media platforms?
- What are the challenges to the effective use of social media platforms among library personnel?

Literature Review

Social media platforms have become an increasingly familiar tool employed by academic libraries to market their resources and services to current and prospective patrons (Collins & Quan-Haase, 2012). Social media are internet-based platforms which enable people to generate, distribute or exchange information in different forms such as text, images, audio and videos. Bashorun et al., (2018) described social media as a communication forum that allows users to electronically disseminate information and share knowledge with each other. Social media involves the use of network applications to convert one-way communication into an interactive online conversation between two or more people (Dixon, 2012). This therefore means that social media is an instrument that help people to communicate with one another regardless of time and location.

Social media use in university libraries is vital as it will help the library staff keep themselves abreast of new advancements in their career and further helps to provide services that will meet the varying needs of their patrons (Adewojo & Adebara, 2016). According to Aras (2014), the objectives of university libraries in using social media are: to promote library services, to provide better access to information, to be where users are, to get feedback from users and to highlight specific features of the library. Promoting library services with social media helps libraries to not only advocate the library but also brings library users to become library advocates. Social media helps in interacting with the library communities and make information available to them in a very accessible way.

Khan & Bhatti (2012) investigated the librarian's attitudes towards the usefulness of Social Media in marketing of library in Pakistan. The study found that Social Media is integral to market library services and products among online users; it captures potential users of library and it offers various benefits to libraries and user communities. The study recommends that online news groups/forums, video sharing (YouTube), Social Networking (Facebook, MySpace), Wikis, professional networking and Blogging are good venues for marketing libraries' different services. These tools are used to spread news and service alerts, to provide quick updates to online users and to publish library news and press releases among online users. Collins and Quan-Haase (2012) investigated the adoption and usage patterns of social media tools by academic libraries in Canada. The focus was on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr as these were seen as the most common social

media tools in Canada. The study showed that Twitter was the most used social media tool among the academic libraries and was followed by Facebook. YouTube was the least used. Abdulaziz et al., (2010) conducted a research on 'sowing the seeds: towards reaping a harvest using social web applications in Nanyang Technology University Library, India. It was reported in the study that the library adopted social media in order to manage the changing pattern, use and expectations of different users. According to the authors, the projects have enhanced the library's traditional web portal and offered new opportunities for the library to engage its users. Thus, it was recommended that social media be integrated to carry out all library services.

In the Nigerian context, the study of Omeluzor et al., (2016) on social networking tools in library service delivery in South-East academic libraries reveals that some librarians used social media in libraries for delivery of library services. Akporhonor and Olise (2015) carried out a study to determine librarians' use of social media for promoting library and information resources and services in university libraries in South-South, Nigeria. The study revealed that blogs and Facebook are the most commonly used social media to promote library and information resources and services in the libraries. Findings also showed librarians' use of social media promotes two-way communication, makes communication with library users easier, and provides forum for feedback and increase library users usage. Oriogu et al., (2020) carried out a study among library personnel who attended the 2019 National Conference/AGM of National Library Association in Delta State. The study reveals that the respondents mostly use Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter in promoting and marketing of library resources and services. Petiti (2011) stated that having an active social media presence, we are fulfilling the expectations of some users and finding users we might not connect with elsewhere. Ezeani and Igwesi (2012) stated that social media are used mostly to provide current and up to date information to clients, provide links to other open source library resources and give information about new arrivals in the case of books through links to the library world and through the updated list of journals.

Methodology

The researchers employed the descriptive survey design and total enumeration sampling technique was used to determine the sample size for the study. The entire population for this study was adopted as the sample size because the entire population is small. The total number of respondents and their institutions used for this study are: University of Benin, Benin City (13), Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma (8), Edo University, Iyamho (3), Benson Idahosa University, Benin City (6), Igbinedion Univeristy, Okada (5), Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa (4), Federal University of Petroleum Resources, Warri (10), Delta State University, Abraka (9), Western Delta University, Oghara (4), Novena University, Ogume (3), Edwin Clark University, Ughelli (3) and Micheal and Cicilialbru University, Agbara-Oto (3). The population of the study comprised of 71 librarians from twelve university libraries and data were gathered through an online questionnaire. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and simple percentage. The results are presented below.

KEY: SA= Strongly Agree; A=Agree; SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree.

Results

The findings of the study are presented in the following tables with explanations

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	39	55
Female	32	45
Total	**71**	**100**

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Majority of the library staff 39(55%) were male and 32(45%) were female.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21-30	17	24
31-40	29	41
41-50	14	20
51-60	11	15
Total	**71**	**100**

From the above table 2, it shows that majority of the respondents 29(41%) were within the age bracket of 31-40years, 17(24%) were within the age bracket of 21-30years, 14(20%) were within the age bracket of 41-50years whereas 11(15%) were within the age of 51-60years.

Table 3: Qualifications of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
B.Sc/B.Ed/B.A/BLIS	21	30
M.Sc/M.A/MLIS	33	46
PhD	17	24
Total	**71**	**100**

Table 3 shows the academic qualifications of the respondents. It shows that 33(46%) were M.Sc holders, 21(30%) were B.Sc holders whereas 17(24%) were PhD holders.

Table 4: Designation of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Graduate Assistant	16	23
Assistant Librarian	13	18.3
Librarian 11	11	15
Librarian 1	14	20
Senior Librarian	11	15
Principal Librarian	6	8.4
Total	**71**	**100**

From the above table 4, it shows that majority of the respondents 16(23%) were Graduate Assistant,14(20%) were Librarian 1, 13(18.3%) were Assistant Librarians, 11(15%) were Senior Librarians and Librarian 11 respectively while 6(8.4%) were Principal Librarians.

Research Question 1: What are the Social Media Platforms used by Library Personnel?

Table 5: Social Media Platforms used by Library Personnel

Social Media Platforms	Frequency
Facebook	66(93%)
WhatsApp	66(93%)
Twitter	47(66%)
LinkedIn	34(48%)
Skype	10(14%)
Instagram	18(25%)
Telegram	23(32%)

Table 5 reveals the social media platforms used by library personnel. It is evident that Facebook and Whatsapp are the most social media platforms used by librarians with 66(93%) respectively.

Research Question 2: What are the Library Services offered/provided by Librarians using Social Media Platforms?

Table 6: Library Services offered/provided Using Social Media

Library Services	Frequency
To create awareness about library resources and services	65(92%)
Library news/events	60(85%)
Ask a librarian/online chat	51(72%)
User orientation	40(56%)
Overdue reminders	40(56%)
Information literacy skills	32(45%)
Current awareness services	55(77%)
Research techniques and tips	25(35%)
Reference services	40(56%)

Table 6 shows the library services performed using social media. Majority of the respondents, 65(92%) mostly use the social media platforms to create awareness about library resources and services and 60(85%) use it to share library news and events.

Research Question 3: What are the Challenges to the Effective use of Social Media Platforms among Library Personnel?

Table 7: Challenges to the Effective use of Social Media

Challenges to the Effective use of Social Media	SA	A	D	SD
Poor internet connectivity	46(65%)	25(35%)	-	-
Erratic power supply	42(59%)	27(38%)	2(3%)	-
Low interest of librarians in learning and utilizing social media	10(14%)	31(44%)	20(28%)	10(14%)
Lack of awareness on the use of social media platforms in offering/providing library services	27(38%)	17(24%)	27(38%)	-
Lack of social media skills	20(28%)	16(23%)	35(49%)	-

Table 7 reveals the challenges to the effective use of social media. Majority of the respondents, that is, 46(65%) and 25(35%) agrees that poor internet connectivity and erratic power supply 42(59%) and 27(38%) were the two major challenges to effective use of social media

Discussion

The study shows that majority of the respondents mostly use Facebook and Whatsapp platforms to provide/offer library services. This is in conformity with the findings of Odiachi and Okuonghae (2016) who found that Facebook and Whatsapp are the two social media platforms mostly used by librarians. On the library services that are performed using social media, it was discovered that most of the respondents use the social media platforms to create awareness about library resources and services and to share library news and events. This is not in conformity with the findings of Oriogu et al., (2020). Majority of the respondents indicated that poor internet connection and lack of constant power supply were the two major challenges to the effective use of social media platforms. This is in agreement with the study of Akporhonor and Olise (2015) and Adewoyin, et al. (2017)**.**

Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of social media has absolutely enhanced library services and has provided a new and excellent platform to the library professionals to reach out to their potential library users. It was also discovered that most of the librarians mainly use Facebook and Whatsapp platforms to promote library resources and services, share library news and events. Some of the challenges to the effective use of social media platforms include poor internet connectivity and lack of regular power supply. The researchers wish to recommend that the library management should provide opportunities for training and retraining of librarians on social media skills and emerging technologies. The school management should also provide adequate internet facilities and improve on electricity supply so that the library staff can enjoy more access to the internet in order to provide effective and efficient services to their users.

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