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Impact of Social Media Tools in Promoting the Library Services in Engineering Colleges in Tamilnadu

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Abstract

Background: Social media tools play a vital role in every domain especially with Library and information Science. This study analyses the various promotional activities done by using the social media tools in Engineering Colleges with respect to Tamilnadu.

Materials and Methods: The data was obtained by quantitative survey method for the study from the 150 library science professionals working in engineering colleges of Tamilnadu.

Results: 150 respondents were actively participated in this survey and resulted that Facebook is the predominant tool used by the library professionals to share the library products and services in the age group of 31-50. Male respondents are using the social media enormously.

Conclusion: Tamilnadu has an ample number of engineering institutions especially in the accessing the information products and services, this study analyses the impact of social media in libraries and its extent to promote the activities of library and information centers.

Keywords: Social Media Tools, Library and Information centers, Engineering Colleges, Tamilnadu

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are considered to be the store house of knowledge, which collects, preserves and disseminate information. The success of any library services and its proficiency in supporting the research and learning is defined by the accurate and well-timed information provided to its users. Thus dissemination of such information is done via various medium which has the ease of its access for the users. This millennium century which allows people to share and exchange their ideas, thoughts and information. The advent of social media and its swift growth

has had its impact on almost all fields now and library is no exception to it. The Libraries and the librarians in this contemporary era have a challenging role, which caters information requirements of users who are gadget freaks and tech savvy.

Social media tools play a vital role in every domain especially with Library and information Science. It is nowadays a vibrant tool to promote the library products and services. In the present era, Users are in the mode of accessing the information by using their hand held devices in order to communicate, organize and share the information. This paper focuses on understanding the different marketing activities done by the libraries to promote the products and services, user participation in these social media tools used by the libraries. The results of this study clearly highlights the factors like age and gender of LIS professionals have a great impact on using the social media tool for marketing library products and services. In order to meet out the expectations of the user community by time to time social media provides a great impact on accessing the current requirements of the user community.

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to understand the impact of social media librarians in engineering colleges in Tamilnadu and the approaches to cater the library products and services. Some of the other objectives are listed below.

- ❖ To identify the age and gender of the library professionals, who actively use the social media for promoting the library products and services.

- ❖ To find out the most popular social networking tool used by library professionals.

- ❖ To identify the purpose for which each social networking tool is being used.

- ❖ To analyze the major services promoted by library professionals through social media.

- ❖ To assess the user friendly social media tool for the library professional.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Google generation users are nowadays able to get the required information through their hand held devices. This is the challenging environment for the libraries and library professionals to carry the right information to the user community in this emerging technology based platforms. In this context there is a need for a study that focuses on the various social media tools used for the promoting the library products and services, most preferred social media tools by the library professionals to market their library services and activities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Marketing of library services has to be more creative, customized and of interest to the users of this century. Interactive services are expected by the current generation users due to the technological advancements.

Connell's (2009) study explored that students have negative feelings about the librarians using Social Networking tools to outreach since it may infringe on their sense of personal privacy. So Connell survey suggests that, "a library would want to use social network sites effectively, librarians should be cautious in establishing communications and relationships with their student friends and avoid mass friending".

Deyrup's (2010) study highlighted that Web 2.0 applications can be used for marketing purposes, librarians are using SNSs like Myspace and Facebook "to promote library affiliation and community building; the virtual environment; Second Life, to create alternative library spaces; and RSS feeds, wikis, and blogs to post announcements and post other information'.

Hinchliffe and Leon (2011) mentioned in their study that, to keep pace with evolving information technologies, librarians use a group of software applications including blogs, wikis and podcasting, media-sharing tools such as YouTube and Flickr, and social networking services such as Twitter and Facebook to market their services and resources with mixed success. Blogs and wikis, as well as social networking and information sharing sites such as Facebook, Flickr and YouTube, create new types of content. Information professionals use tools such as RSS (Really Simple Syndication), tagging and bookmarking as a means of promotion.

Horn (2011) indicated that "Online Marketing Strategies for Reaching Today's Teens", states that Web 2.0 applications like SNSs are the best tools for marketing library collections, marketing the library itself by posting different photos inside the library of computers, books, rooms and so on, and marketing library programme.

Mollel (2013) said that the marketing mix is traditionally referred to as the 4Ps: price, product, promotion and place; however the fifth P, people, is now commonly included. Although the marketing mix was developed for imparting the advantages of a tangible product, with the focus on product marketing, the literature agrees on the importance of applying this focus to service promotion. As the need for promotion of services has grown and is now more widely recognized, the marketing mix has been refined and adapted to include services, not just products. One of the key marketing mix strategies is effective promotion.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative study using the questionnaire method. The questions were framed to capture the demographic details of the librarians and also data related to effective, resourceful, efficient use of social media by the libraries and the librarians. The questionnaire was distributed among 150 librarians of engineering colleges in Tamilnadu.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The collected questionnaire is tabulated below. Table 1 explores the demographic profile of the respondents of this study.

S.No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Gender	No. of Respondents
		Table 1. Demographic Profile: Age and Gender			
1.	20 - 30	39	26	Male	109
2.	31 - 40	72	48	Female	41
3.	41 - 50	27	18		
4.	51 and above	12	8		

Table 1 clearly shows that 48% of respondents are between the age group of 31 – 40. 18% respondents are under the age group of 41 – 50. 26 % respondents fall under the 20 – 30 age group and 8 % respondents are above 51years. It is clear from the analysis that library professionals between the age group of 31 – 50 are more familiar with the usage of social media tools in libraries. Gender study of the respondents shows that male respondents are using the social media in libraries predominantly.

Preferred Medium of Access to Library Resources

S.No	Preferred Medium	No. of Respondents	Response %
	Table 2. User preferences to access library resources		
1	Library Website	78	52
2	Social Network	32	21
3	Library Visit	28	19
4	Any Other	12	8

Table 2 analyzes the preferred medium of access to library resources. 52% of the respondents prefer to access the library resources through library website. 21 % of the respondents prefer the social networking medium to access the library resources and only 19% prefer to go in person to access the resources. This reveals the increased trend of user's preference to access library resources through online mode.

Frequent of Library User Interaction in Social Media

Table 3. User's approach in Social Media Interaction with Library

S.No	Do users prefer to interact via Social Network	Response %
1.	Always	74
2.	Sometimes	50

3.	Rarely	26
4.	Never	0

Table 3 shows that 74% of respondents always prefer to interact via social media with the library. 50% respondents sometimes prefer to interact through social media and 26% rarely prefer to use social media to interact with library. No respondent (0%) is against the use of social media for interaction with the library.

Preferred Social Media Tool for the Promotion of Library Products and Services

Table 4. Most useful Social Media tool for library services communication			
S.No	Useful Social Media to communicate library services	No. of Respondents	Response %
1.	Facebook	51	34
2.	Twitter	33	22
3.	Linked In	16	10.6
4.	WhatsApp	40	26.66
5.	MySpace & Others	10	6.66

Table 4 indicates the Facebook (34% respondents) is the powerful social media tool used to communicate library related services. Linked In (10.6%) , Twitter (22%) and WhatsApp (26.66%) is also used to communicate library services to the users. These tools are used to ensure maximum reach of library services related information to the users.

Frequent of Communication using the Social Media

Table 5. Frequency of communication through the social media			
S.No	Frequency of Social Media Communication	No. of Respondents	Response %
1.	Daily	39	26
2.	Weekly	51	34
3.	Fortnightly	37	24.66
4.	Monthly	23	15.3

Table 5 shows the frequency of social media communication done by the LIS professionals. 34% of respondents do it weekly, 26% do it daily, 24.66% do it fortnightly and 15.3% do it monthly. Considering the demand for social media communication it is observed that the daily updation should have been more than the weekly social media communication.

Predominantly Used Social Media Tool for Knowledge Sharing

S.No	Social Media tool used for Knowledge Sharing	No. of Respondents	Response %
Table 6. Predominantly used social media tool for knowledge sharing			
1.	Facebook	45	30
2.	WhatsApp	39	26
3.	Twitter	35	23.3
4.	Linked In	20	13.3
5.	Delicious	11	7.3

Table 6 shows that 30% respondents prefer Facebook as a knowledge sharing tool, followed by Whatzapp (26%) which is providing speedy information , Twitter (23.3%), Linked In for which 13.3 % of respondents have given their preferences, which depicts that users are in need of user friendly, easily readable tools for knowledge sharing.

User Friendly Social Media Tool for Library Professionals

S.No	Social media tool which has ease to connect user and library professional	No. of Respondents	Response %
Table 7. User friendly social media tool which connects users and the library professional			
1.	Facebook	52	34.6
2.	Twitter	27	18
3.	WhatsApp	35	23.3
4.	Linked In	23	15.3
5.	Delicious	13	8.66

Table 7 shows that Facebook (34.6% respondents) is felt to be the easiest social media tool which connects the user and library professionals. 23.3 % user prefers Whatzapp, 18% of respondents feel Twitter to be more convenient social media tool for them to connect the library professional and user. 15.3% respondents feel Linked In to be useful social media tool.

Most Preferred Social Media Tool for Book Reviews

S.No	Social Media tool used for sharing book reviews	No. of Respondents	Response %
Table 8. Most preferred social media tool for book reviews			

1.	Facebook	37	24.66
2.	Whatzapp	55	36.66
3.	Twitter	25	16.6
4.	Jelly books	22	14.66
5.	Goodreads	11	7.33

Table 8 shows that 36.66% for Whatzapp, 24.6 % for Facebook, 16.66% for Twitter, 14.66% of respondents use Goodreads for sharing the book reviews followed by 7.33% using the Jelly books for sharing book reviews via social media.

Discussion

The present scenario challenges the academic libraries with reduced budget, the ever changing stress in learning, teaching is due to which libraries are mandated to undergo inclusive and wide-reaching initiatives to build, custom and uphold the electronic collection, print collection and services for the library users.

Almost all libraries have started using social media tools to promote their services and resources, which is also considered to be an effective platform for in-house professional communication in any institutions. The social media tools are considered to be a useful base to introduce library services through web technology for the benefit of both the Library and Information Science professional and to the library users. The ultimate ideology of using social media tools is to promote library services and resources and to improve the prominence of the library.

This study undoubtedly brings out the high impact of gender and age factor of the Library and Information Science professionals in using the social media tool for marketing library services and resources. This study divulges that well-structured and unceasing marketing techniques through the use of social media tools will guarantee that the library resources and services are up to the expectation of the users. The success and reach of the services, resources provided via the Social media tools can be effective only if the libraries update the information published in these tools frequently.

The results of this study will allow the Library and Information Science professional to understand the effectiveness of the available social media tools and area of its use for promoting the library services and resources. Library and Information Science professionals can get to know the choices of promotion strategies, choice of social media tools etc. only if they have a better understanding of the their respective user group. The operative tool used for promoting the library services depends on the environment. The tool used should be flexible and adaptive as per the user's requirement.

Conclusion

The use of social media tools has become very extensive in the current digital scenario and academic institutions are no exception to this. It's significant to note that Library and Information Science professionals have also shown much prominence to the use of social media tools for their library services and resources. It is also agreed upon by the Library and Information Science professionals that social media tools are very effective platform to showcase and promote the library services and resources. The ease of accessing these tools by the user group has assured the best u of the library collection and improving the library services as per the user requirement.

The social media tools are known to be shared platform through which the LIS professionals can reach out to various types of users groups with ease. It is noted that young generation professionals are more active in using these tools and considering their tech savvy nature they prefer social media over the traditional methods. Most of the respondents feel that using social media tools are the easiest way to communicate with their user group, meet their requirements. This also helps in identify the user's information seeking pattern and their needs, which in turn helps the LIS professionals to enhance their services.

This study reveals that the most used preferred and popular social media tools are Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn; which are being used for knowledge sharing, book reviews etc. Considering the ease of access to these tools by the users, LIS professional should focus more on the updation of information provided via social media tools. This trend of using social media tools to market library services mandates the need to educate the LIS professionals and the users about the importance, values of social media tools which currently is benefiting the visibility of libraries in the digital era.

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