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EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBRARY MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT THROUGH DIGITAL MEDIA

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Abstract *Previously, the effectiveness of traditional forms of communication and marketing were adequate in library engagement and marketing activities. In the recent past, the Library Marketing has undergone a lot of change, and the information technology has proved and brought substantial changes in digital marketing channels. With innovative technology, libraries are engaged in a constant search for better ways for communicating its resources and services and marketing them effectively. The internet world has brought all users and libraries together to find each other and share their information requirements. Libraries are capturing its user through multi marketing-channels including social media. Here an attempt has been made to understand the library marketing and engagement tools in the digital era and case study of Alliance University Library as example for marketing e-resources as well.*

Keywords: *Library Marketing, Social Media, Digital Marketing, Library Engagement, Case Study*

INTRODUCTION

Library Marketing Engagement is a strategy that directly engages users, invites and inspires them to take part in the evaluation of a library brand. Marketing engagement believes that the user should be made to receive information and interact directly with the Library on one to one basis during service transaction and creation of its marketing channels. The marketing engagement connects people instantly wherever they are and the essential purpose of marketing engagement is to connect the user in two way dialogue or suggestive interaction. Any advertisement that directly gives a message in one way communication does not qualify as marketing engagement (television, print ads etc.). The dynamic websites such as web 2.0/ 3.0, social Media like blogs, live chats, email, sms etc. make people interact with the system from where they are required to get the service.

All the resources and services can be directly taken to user through interactive channels of digital media, rather than to wait for the user to find it. The resources or services take themselves directly to the users through digital campaigns which reverberate on an individual level. This way library can build the relationships with strong and everlasting trust among user community to enhance its branding (in the name of service & resources).

Some of the factors (Mehta, 2015) identified while navigating through marketing engagement and are found to have strong propagation from social media are;

1. Interactivity
2. Immediacy
3. Facilitation
4. Engagement
5. Co-operation & Collaboration
6. Experience
7. Trust

NEED FOR USER DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Marketing is a prime triggering factor for any organization to sell their products or services, and over the last decade it has been fundamentally revolved around the communication and technology. The speed of internet penetration in the market has been extensively increased. In the year 1995 the connectivity of internet (InternetLiveStats.com& Internetworldstats.com, 2016) among the world population was just 1%, but at present, around 46.1% of the world population has been connected through internet. India is the second largest country having 375 million (as on 2015) users, and 30 % of Indian population has connectivity to internet. This statistics highlights the familiarity of the internet/digital

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usage by the population. Thus, technology connects people across the world without any barrier. More and more people are moving towards online education for their personal and professional requirements and the institutional ability to guide them through traditional procedure is diminishing. Present generation of users prefer to access information through digital media. ICT revolution and its advantages have enabled users to change the traditional method of information transaction to digital mode. The advantages of digital engagement are:

- Users attraction towards internet
- Faster communication method
- Easy to access
- Time saving
- No physical barriers
- Easy to reach target group

INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TOOLS FOR LIBRARY MARKETING ENGAGEMENT

Many libraries are engaged in constant search for better ways of exposing their resources and services and market them effectively in turn. Many libraries are adapting to advanced communication methods rather than traditional ones to reach their users. Innovative digital tools are derived from modern digital technologies which have made the process easy to reach the larger groups.

INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TOOLS EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing is being extensively used as an effective tool to engage library users in building library brand (Resources & Services). This tool helps libraries to communicate and

reach the users effectively and instantaneously to engage with the services offered by the libraries. Email is a direct marketing method which is highly interactive, with an emphasis on the specific needs of each and every user. It has made easy for libraries to distribute services and resources among its users through mass distribution like specific group distribution, individual distribution etc. This method could be used most efficiently for marketing of library services, resources, events, query resolving, transactions etc. Advantages of email marketing are:

- Gradual recession in traditional marketing channels
- Enhancement of demands for new digital channels by young generation
- Enhancement in interactive and instantaneous information transaction
- Growth of multi-channel campaigns
- High rate of personal reach
- Rapid technological growth

Disadvantages of email marketing are:

- Forwarding emails may create junk
- Require internet connection

SMS MARKETING

SMS or short text message service marketing has become extremely popular over the years. It's a 360-degree communication strategy that reaches a person or group instantaneously. In India 83% of population is using mobiles and it ranks 2nd in the world (Mapsofworld.com, 2016). SMS marketing is one of the fast reaching effective method for libraries to promote their library resources and services. In India few institutions like Bundelkhand University Library at Jhansi and Alliance University Library at Bengaluru are using SMS marketing as a tool to promote their services.

Table 1: Growth of Mobile Phone Users in India

Growth of Mobile Phone user in India (As on 31.03.2012 to 31.05.2015) (In Millions)					
Items	31.03.2012	31.03.2013	31.03.2014	31.03.2015	31.05.2015
No. of Mobile Subscribers	919.17	867.81	904.52	969.54	975.74

Source : www.indiastat.com

BENEFITS OF SMS MARKETING

- Personalized service
- Time saving
- No physical barrier
- SMS alerts on book lending services
- Alert to collect reserved books

- Reminder with regard to due date/overdue fines.
- New addition - books/materials/databases etc.
- Library news and event alerts (with details)

DISADVANTAGES OF SMS MARKETING

- Distortion of language structure
- Forwarded messages may create junk

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have defined social media as “a group of Internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.”

Safko and Brake (2009) have defined that social media “refers to activities, practices, and behaviors among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media”.

Above definitions highlight that marketing engagement is possible through social media to promote products or services of an organization. The types of social media include social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, LinkedIn, Twitter, flickr etc. It also enables libraries to engage users in utilizing resources and services at comparatively low cost with higher rate of efficiency rather than through traditional communication channels. Engagement on social media converts users as participants rather than viewers. The social media has made an option to track or generate customized usage reports of users on any particular item on the network. This kind of report generation supports libraries to re-evaluate and work for further betterment of their services.

ADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

- Users get motivated to use the library
- Information can be circulated rapidly/instantaneously
- Instantaneously information reaches more than one user

- Information can be sent globally by just press of a button
- Information can be copied/downloaded/re circulated
- Easy to get feedback in the form of comments and like options
- Direct and interactive marketing of Library resources/services/events
- Feedbacks will help in improving library services
- Establishes a brand name and increases awareness among users
- Monitoring entry and exit by users
- Easy to compile statistics about the events/transactions

DISADVANTAGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

- Social media is very addictive
- People may think lot of time being wasted on social media
- Older generation/people may not be comfortable/willing to use it
- Many groups/pages may not be reliable
- People may get to use/misuse/abuse your personal information

MOBILE APPS

A Mobile application is a computer designed program which runs on smartphone and tablet computers. It is easy to download and install on any mobile device and use it. Following are some of the benefits of mobile applications;

- Mobile friendly website with easy to use
- One touch access to information
- Easy to carry device anywhere/everywhere
- Apps enhances user engagement by quick connection
- Simple, instant and direct information

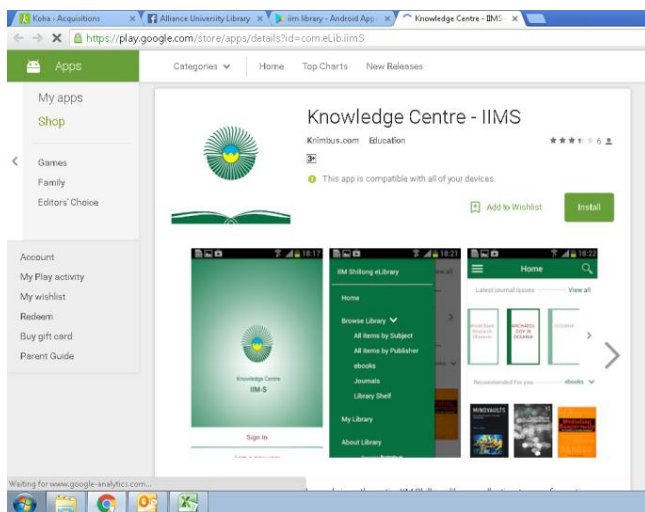


Fig. 1: IIM Shillong Library Mobile App

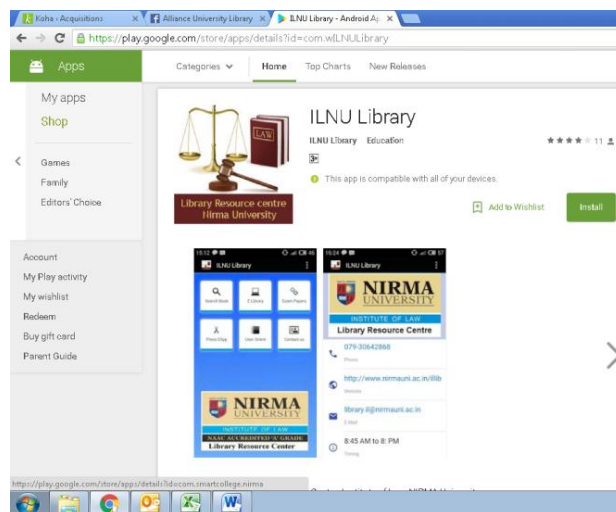


Fig. 2: NIRMA University Library Mobile App

COMPLETE LIBRARY MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT CHANNELS

Many libraries are continued to follow a combination of both traditional and modern marketing tools to reach out users, for promoting their resources and services. The following figure shows complete marketing engagement strategies for libraries. Through these strategies, libraries can bring back their users on usage track and serve efficiently.

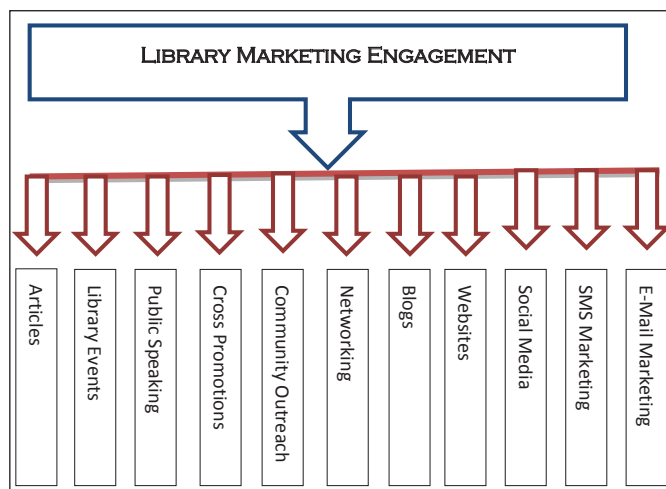


Fig. 3: Marketing Engagement

LIBRARY MARKETING CASE STUDY AT ALLIANCE UNIVERSITY

Alliance University is a private University established in Bengaluru, Karnataka State by Universities Act No.34 in

the year 2010 and is recognized by the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi. The University is offering Bachelor’s degree, postgraduate degree, doctoral degree and several professional certificate programs. Alliance University Library started operating in 2008 under the aegis of Alliance Business School. Current collection of the Library is - more than 63000 books, 23 databases, 379 journals, and more than 1000 CD/DVDs, and serving more than 5000 users (Alliance University, 2016).

The Library has initiated many programs of carrying out many promotional initiatives to enhance the user base and use of online resources as well. In the initial stages, the Library has struggled to attract more users to the library and reach expected usage on the library resources and services. Gradually library had to adopt many traditional channels such as notice board display, conducting book exhibitions, new arrivals display to Library webpage (Link facility), library trainings etc. to market and attract its users. In spite of all these efforts the library usage had not been increased to the level of desired.

Later, it was decided to use digital marketing engagement from January 2016. In the process, skilled library staff were identified and entrusted with the responsibility of developing a library page on Facebook and circulated to users through institutional group email. The Library Facebook page has been regularly updated with the postings such as Library regular events, new arrivals, notices, photos of events etc. and regular email reminders were sent to users informing resources, services and events of the library. Attractive posters were designed and displayed by the skilled library staff through social media and tradition channels as well.

As a result, the library has experienced 15% enhancement in library overall usage. Further, monthly Library online

quizzes were conducted on library subscribed e-resources to understand the exact requirement and to match with the available resources, services and events. Result is,

enhancement in use of databases (up to 50%) during month of the event being conducted. The winner was recognized with attractive prizes sponsored by publisher/vendors.

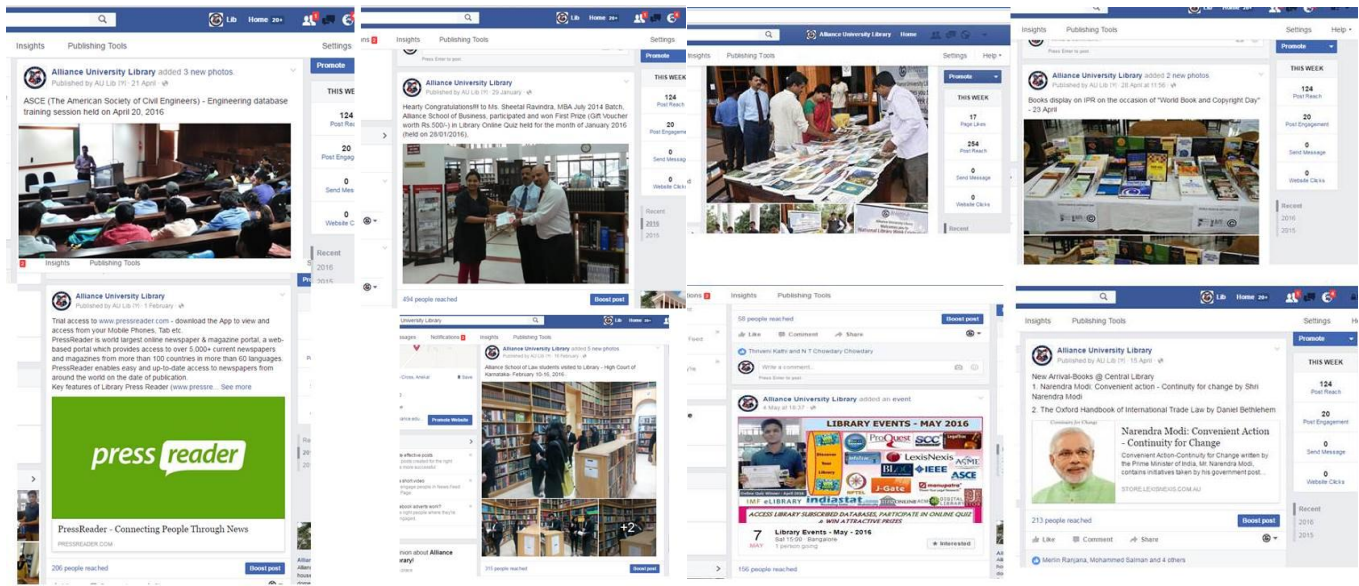


Fig. 4: Facebook as a Tool for Marketing Engagement @ Alliance University



Fig. 5: Posters Display at User Engaged Areas @ Campus

CONCLUSION

Digital marketing tools are effective and instantaneous compared to traditional channels. Library marketing engagement through digital media builds a brand of library and enhances usage of resources and services. It adds interactive mode to understand requirements of the users and

improve library standards. Digital social networks remove physical barriers and bring people on one platform to engage them in sharing and transferring information. Libraries are needed to develop such digitally emerging social networks to bring together users and resources to create a brand of their own to make them continuously engage in library related activities.

NOTES

1. <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/> <http://www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm>
2. http://www.marketleap.com/report/ml_report_24.htm
3. <http://www.cilip.org.uk/blog/5-ways-libraries-are-using-social-media>
4. <http://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jbm/papers/Vol7-issue1/I0716974.pdf?id=5311>

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